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From the collection
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A
DISCUSSION

ON THE

IMPORTANT QUESTION,

DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THE DOCTRINE OF THE FINAL HOLINESS
AND HAPPINESS OF ALL MANKIND?

A SERIES OF LETTERS

BETWEEN

REV. ABEL C. THOMAS,

AND

REV LUTHER LEE.

PUBLISHED BY E. MANFORD,

TERRE-HAUTE, IN.

1845.

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PREFACE:

The following pages treat on subjects of vital importance. What is to be the condition of mankind in the eternal world is of great moment to every son and daughter of Adam.—The world disagrees on this subject. It is maintained by some that our race will be divided into two classes in eternity; one of which will be holy, happy, and in heaven with the Creator, and the other sinful, miserable, and in a place of torment with devils. In the succeeding pages both of these theories are maintained; and the arguments and proofs that were supposed by the advocate of each to sustain his view of the destiny of mankind, are stated and vindicated with much talent, and generally in a christian spirit.

READER, as you are deeply interested in the realities of ETERNITY, peruse attentively and prayerfully this little book. Compare each theory maintained therein with the Spirit and Word of God, remembering that must be false which clashes with them, and that must be true which accords with those infallable guides. Also weigh carefully and impartially the arguments and proofs for and against each theory, and let reason and the scriptures decide which is and which is not founded in truth.

The Rev. Abel C. Thomas, who is the advocate of universal purity and bliss, is one of the most talented writers and preachers of the Universalist denomination. He is as well qualified probably as any man to defend his cause. The Rev. Luther Lee, who is the advocate of endless sinning and suffering, possesses evidently great ability, and undoubtedly did the best he could to sustain his theory.

We commenced the publication of this discussion about three years since, but from various causes delayed finishing it till the present time. When we commenced it we were a novice in the art of book publishing, and can now detect a few errors in the book that we wish did not exist. Instead of "Thomas to Lee," or "Lee to Thomas," Mr. should precede the names. We regret the letters are not numbered.

ERASMUS MANFORD.

Terre-Haute, Ia. Feb. 1845.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

QUESTION.—Do the Scriptures teach the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all Mankind?

DEAR SIR:—In endeavoring to establish the affirmative of the question, I shall adopt such methods of argumentation as would, in my judgment, be recommended by the Great Teacher, were he personally present to advise me in the premises. I shall strive to reason as he reasoned, in addressing the mind and heart and humanity. I shall diligently seek a true understanding of the principles he assumed, and of the items of doctrine he revealed. By legitimate inference from the former, and right exposition of the latter I shall hope to prove that the *Scriptures teach the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind*. It is my fervent prayer, that every sentence I utter may be framed in the spirit of the heavenly law, and be thereby commended to the candid consideration of my correspondent.

A knowledge of the most prominent relation of God to man, will greatly contribute to a right understanding of the direct testimonies of Holy Writ. I therefore begin my argument with the Scriptural representations of the Supreme Being as Our Father in Heaven. The doctrine of the divine paternity occupied a conspicuous station in the teachings of the Messiah; and he urged the inferences therefrom with an emphasis which indicated a high estimate of their value.

My first proposition is, that *God is the Father of the whole human family*—(not simply because He created them, for He created the beasts of the field and the stones of the street, which are never denominated His children nor He their father—but) because He created them in his own image, Gen. i. 26, 27; a little lower than the angels, Psalms viii. 5; and thus constituted Himself the God and Father of all, Eph. iv. 9; in whose similitude mankind were still created, four thousand years after the transgression in the garden, Jas. iii. 9.

It is true, Elymas the sorcerer, was pronounced a child of the devil, Acts. xiii. 10, and the persecuting Jews were declared to be of their father the devil, John viii. 44—but neither of these facts can contradict the universal paternity of God. *He is the only Creator*, and He never created any soul of our race in any other image than his own. However vile the offspring of an earthly father may become, they are still his children. The relation exists independently of moral character, and can never be dissolved. And whether men be sons of thundor, Mark, iii. 17, or children of Belial, Deut. xiii. 13; children of wisdom, Matt. xi. 16, or of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2—they are all the offspring of the Most High, in the primary sense that Adam was the son of God, Luke iii. 38.

In the spirit of this sentiment, the Supreme Being recognized the rebellious Israelites as children, though *backsliding* and *sottish*; Jor. iii. 14, iv. 22; and we are instructed to pray for the forgiveness of our sins, the petition being addressed to *Our Father in Heaven*, Matt. vi. 9, Luke xi. 2, 4.

My second proposition is, that *our knowledge of God as a Heavenly Father must be derived from what we know of the same relation among men*. Hence it was said to the house of Israel, "Thou shalt consider in thy heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee," Deut. viii. 5. In a similar strain, our Saviour appealed to a father's as a revelator of divine truth "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?" Matt. vii. 9—11. Carefully note, 1st. That the comparison here instituted is not between asking and not asking, but between *God* as a Father and *man* as a father. 2nd. Though the persons addressed were denominated *evil*, God was declared to be their Father. 3d. They were instructed to look into their own hearts as fathers, and thence derive knowledge of God as their Father in heaven. 4th. Being evil, they were to consider their own paternal feelings, not as *the*

measure, but merely as an *indecation* of the unfathomable depths of the love of God.

In our present inquiry, we are chiefly concerned in the spirit of parental love and not in its method of operation.—The possessor may be short sighted and weak, but the principle is far-reaching and mighty. Whenever, wherever, and by whatever means it operates, the end designed is the highest good of its object. To the Supreme father we ascribe the same spirit in an infinite degree. In Him, it is never weary and never blind. In Him, it travails in the greatness of its strength. With Him shall be never the wail of Rachel, nor the lamentation over Absalom—for triumphing by the energies of his own grace, the universe of His offspring shall be brought to adore him as the Father and Saviour of all.

If it be said that God in the relation of Father, will give only on the condition of being asked, I reply, that if an earthly father were to give only on condition of verbal petition, the feeble infant and dumb child would be excluded from his blessing. The asking mentioned by our Saviour, simply denotes need, and a sense of need. But a father's love extends beyond the present circumstances of his offspring. If there be one of the number who manifest no such sense of need, the father seeks to produce it, and watches closely for its first manifestation, that he may bless with a prospect of permanent advantage. The talented and the idiotic, the obedient and the rebellious, the healthy and the diseased, are the objects of his deep solicitude, and if he be influenced by the feelings proper to a father, all the measures he adopts will be designed to promote their welfare.—He will adapt his means to the different circumstances of his children, and never be discouraged in his efforts to do them good.

If an earthly father "being evil," thus feels towards his offspring, and so conducts, can the most quickened imagination transcend the benevolent intentions of the Father of all? Can we justly conceive of Him as proposing or effecting any less glorious final result, than the holiness and happiness of all mankind? What *other*, what *different* consummation,

would perfectly consist with the spirit of God as the Universal Father.

The argument, though of the inferential character, addresses itself directly to the mind and heart. My correspondent has doubtless considered its bearings, and will endeavor to nullify its force by a series of objections—of which the following may constitute a part:

Obj. 1. "Man is depraved; and since 'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,' we are not at liberty to compare ourselves with God, nor judge of Him from what we know of ourselves."

Reply. The comparison objected to, is repeatedly urged in the Scriptures; with an injunction to take into account the depravity of man. The simple fact that God is denominated *Our Father*, is sufficient authority for comparing Him with those who sustain the parental relation among men, ever remembering that the latter, "*being evil*," fall infinite short of the former, in purity and fervency of a father's love. And in whatever sense it be true that the "heart is desperately wicked," no one will apply this declaration to the enduring affection of a parent for his offspring. We should rather seek the evidence of depravity in the estrangement or deadness at this feeling, than in the displays of its vitality. Of the ostrich it is said, "she is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not her's . . . because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding," Job xxxix; but the comparison is not between the bird of the desert and the Supreme Being—else our argument would be baseless. It is to *man*, exercising the feelings proper to a *father*, though he be vile in many respects, that the appeal is made; and in that appeal there is an acknowledgement of the holiness of paternal love.

Obj. 2. "In your argument from the relation of God as a Father, you have entirely overlooked the consideration that He is also both Lawgiver and Judge."

Reply. The relations of *Creator* and *creature* did not exist until something was created. When the *greater* fashioned man in His own image, the relation of *Father* and *offspring* was formed, and it was the Father who became

lawgiver and judge. The latter two relations are subordinate to the former; and we shall widely err from the truth, if we fail to seek in the laws and judgment of Jehovah the spirit of parental love. It is the *Father* who is the *Lawgiver*; it is the *Father* who is the *Judge* of His universal family.

It will be vain to introduce the case of Lucius Junius Brutus as an offset. In the capacity of Judge, he sentenced his sons to an ignominious death for conspiring to restore the Tarquins to the Roman throne. There is something so shocking in the citation of the conduct of Brutus as an apt illustration of the doings of the Supreme Being, that the soul yearns to discover some marked defects in the parallel.

Of Brutus it is declared, that, "he was hard tempered like steel, and in no degree humanized by education." Besides this consideration, the parallel is very imperfect, because the law which required the judgment of death, was not made by Brutus in the character of a parent—whereas God as Supreme Lawgiver and Judge, is but administering His own government as universal Father. The corresponding relations among men may be, and generally are disjointed. A judge in the South may be required to give a decision which will separate mother and child, and doom them both to hopeless bondage. His own sense of right may condemn the law, and he may feel that the sentence outrages every thing holy; nevertheless, he is merely a judge appointed to administer the laws made by others, and has no alternative but to obey or resign. But He who is Supreme Judge is also Supreme Lawgiver; and the relations of Lawgiver and Judge are based in the antecedent, and higher and more sublime relation of Father of all. It is from this latter relation that our knowledge of Him must be derived. It is not to man as either lawgiver or judge that the appeal is made—but to man as father. Did the spirit of this relation rest upon Brutus as an unction from on high? Verily, he was hardened against his sons as though they were not his, and shed not a tear in view of their death-doom. If we desire fitting illustrations of the Holy One, let us seek them, not in an iron age of a Pagan state, but among the most pious people of the Christian world—ever remembering,

that there is no conflict between the relations of the Supreme Being.

Obj. 3. "God has at divers times destroyed his children by fire and flood, which no good earthly father would do; and therefore no conclusion can safely be drawn from the paternal feelings among men."

Reply. I have contended for the *principle* merely—namely, the love of an earthly parent seeking the good of his children. Among good fathers, "there are diversities of operations, but the *same spirit*." It is the principle of parental love, the spirit of a father that we attribute to the Supreme Being. It is from this spirit that we are to infer, it is not to a father's *wisdom* that the appeal is made to a father's *love*.

Several points of dissimilarity must always be kept in remembrance: 1st. An earthly father, "being evil," sometimes seeks the hurt of his offspring; but Our Father in heaven cannot be influenced by improper feelings—being "without variableness, or even the shadow of turning." 2. An earthly father, even when actuated by the purest motives may greatly err in the choice of means; but there can be no error of the sort with the Supreme Being. 3. The jurisdiction of an earthly father does not extend beyond the present life; but the jurisdiction of Our Father in heaven is without termination. 4th. Death, inflicted by an earthly father would be an *end*—the child being thus removed beyond his authority and power; but in the divine government it is otherwise. Eternity is merely the to-morrow of Time.

The adage, that "the end justifies the means," must be very much restricted when claimed by man—because of man's liability to err, not in spirit only, but in the knowledge of the best and wisest means. But the adage is true, in its largest sense when applied to the Supremo Being.—To His eye, all causes and all their operations and results are perfectly unveiled; and the measure of His government though so complicated and generally mysterious to human view, are moving onward to a sublime consummation. All His arrangements and judgments must be regarded not as *ends*, but as *means*.

The fact that God has often times done what no good

earthly father would do, is therefore no objection to our argument—for the Scriptural appeal is made not to a father's *wisdom*, but to a father's *love*; and the correspondence is to be sought not in the means employed, but in the ends designed.

Obj. 4. "Sin has existed for 6000 years, and if this protracted evil be consistent with the paternal government of God, our knowledge of Him as a Father can furnish no assurance of a better state of things hereafter."

Reply. This objection has been partly anticipated; nevertheless it is worthy of separate note.

I remark, 1st. Though sin has existed for 6000 years in the aggregate, no individual has suffered its pains for any considerable portion of that space. 2nd. Even sixty centuries of time, bear no proportion to eternity. 3d. Evil, whether directly or indirectly introduced into the government of God, must be considered a means, not an end. 4th. The end contemplated by the permission or ordination of evil, must be in harmony with spirit of God as Our Father.

It may be urged that there are multitudes of cases in which we see no benefit accruing from the existence of evil; and that millions die in impenitency. Granted: But rational creatures are not restricted to the evidence of sight. We cannot see the good resulting from all the divine dispensations, and for this reason among many reasons, the Supreme Being revealed Himself in the paternal relation, that we might "walk by faith." Hence Philip said to our Saviour, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," John xiv. 8. He thus signified that all he needed, was a perfectly clear apprehension of God as the Father. He could thence infer the glorious result of the divine economy and enter into rest. With the assurance that God is moved in all his plans by feelings proper to a Father, he could look in faith for universal good as the issue, and endure "as seeing Him who is invisible."

It will be even so with us, if we be "not faithless but believing"—and though we see and know that many pass away from earth unsanctified, our faith will be unmoved if we but remember that God is our Father. I do not confine the operations of His holy spirit to the brief span of human life.—

It is not given to me "to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power,"—Acts i. 7; yet is given me to know that the times and the season, and all the means necessary for the accomplishment of all His purposes, are at the disposal of the One God and Father of all. From His paternal relation to mankind we cannot indeed infer the *when, where and how—time, place and means*—nor is it requisite that we should; but admitting the universal paternity of God, and the propriety of deriving knowledge of his spirit from what we know of a wise and good earthly father, I see not how the conclusion of the Universalist can be avoided, I will not dispute about the nature of the process, nor about how long the refiners fire will be required to burn until the dross be consumed; but I shall insist on the final holiness and happiness of all mankind as the only consummation in perfect harmony with the spirit of the Father of all. That spirit and the temporary existence of evil, are not incompatible.

The preceding objections are the most plausible ones usually urged against the argument drawn from the paternal character of God. In my replies, I have taken a wider range of thought than was actually demanded, inasmuch as I desired to present some of the views of the divine government entertained by the undersigned. It was partly with the same view that I began the discussion with an inferential argument. In my next letter, I will invite your attention to direct testimonies of Holy Writ.

Firmly believing and heartily hoping and praying for the truth of Universalism,

I am respectfully your's,

ABEL C. THOMAS,

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR:—I have had your first attempt to sustain the affirmative of the question before us under serious consideration, and now proceed to state my objections to the conclusiveness of your argument. You say, "My first position is, that *God is the Father of the whole human family*, because he created them in his own image.

I trust we shall have no controversy about the premises, but only about the conclusion you attempt to draw from them. That God created man in his own image, I freely admit, and that therefore God sustains the relation of Creator to all mankind, and must forever sustain this relation to them, I also admit, but that all men will *therefore* be made finally holy and happy, I deny. In speaking of the relation which exists between God and man, God being the Creator and man the creature, you say, "*The relation exists independently of moral character*, and can never be dissolved."

This concession ruins your whole argument. That the concession is sound, you nor no one else can question, for we all see that men of every shade of moral character do sustain this relation to God; and therefore, as you admit, it exists independently of moral character. Now, you and all our readers must have common sense enough to see that the *certain* holiness of all mankind *cannot follow* from a relation that exists *independently of their moral character*, that is a relation that exists independently of the fact of their holiness or upholiness. "The relation," you say, "*exists independently of their moral character*," and, if so, there can be no necessary connection between the relation and the holiness of mankind; and as there is no connection between the relation and the ho-

liness of men, to infer that they will all be holy because the relation exists, is most unreasonable and illogical.

The very thing necessary to make your argument good is wanting, viz: a connection between the relation from which you reason, and the point you attempt to prove. There is no connection between the premises and the conclusion, for you admit that the premises exist independently of the conclusion. The premises are, "God is the Father of the whole human family—the conclusion is "all mankind will be finally holy and happy," yet you say "the relation exists independently of moral character," that is of holiness and happiness. Thus you see that there is no connection between your premises and your conclusion, and, of course, your argument is good for nothing. Suppose it be put in the form of a syllogism to test its soundness—

1. "God is the Father of the whole human family;
2. "The relation exists independently of moral character;"
3. "Therefore all men must be finally holy and happy."

You cannot fail to see that the second proposition, instead of connecting the conclusion with the first proposition, as it should, to make the argument sound, absolutely separates them and contradicts the conclusion.

I have said enough already to show that your entire argument is unsound, and does not prove the point you have undertaken to sustain, and if I wrote for your benefit alone, I should be willing to leave it here for the consideration of your enlightened understanding; but as I write for many who have not the opportunities for investigation that you and I enjoy, I will endeavor, if need be, to make the subject still plainer.

1. The relation of which you speak, and upon which you appear to rest your hope of the salvation of all men, does not imply or secure any such result, as a few considerations will show.

God was the Father of man in the garden of Eden, before sin and misery entered into the world, as much as he is now

or ever will be, and yet notwithstanding this relation, sin broke in upon the peace, happiness and holiness of this moral system, and involved it in guilt and misery. Now, it appears to me that a relation which did not keep man holy and happy when he was so, cannot be depended upon to make him holy and happy, now he is polluted and miserable. The argument which you employ to prove that all men will be finally holy and happy, would have been just as good in proof that man could never have become unholy and unhappy, had it been employed in the garden of Eden by the great seducer. Suppose him to have said to our first parent; "You are here in paradise, God prepared these delightful bowers, these flowery walks, and these bending trees ever laden with full ripe fruits for thee! All, all is for thee—God who made them all for thee, is thy Father, and this relation will always exist, and therefore thou canst never become unholy and unhappy." I leave it to the candid to judge if, under such circumstances, the argument would not have possessed more force than it now has, with the sad experience of the world staring it in the face, and yet in that case it would have been false, and therefore it cannot be depended upon now. Again, this relation has existed during nearly six thousand years' reign of sin and misery, which shows that it cannot of itself be relied upon as a sure ground of hope for future holiness and happiness.

The relation we sustain to God, simply as our Creator, is the same, now that it ever has been and ever must be; hence, if any new results are looked for, changing the destiny of man from its present aspect, the evidence of such change must be drawn from some other source than this ever existing and unchangeable relation. As the relation is unchangeable, what is consistent with it at one time, may be consistent with it at another time, and as sin and misery are now consistent with this relation, they may always be consistent with it. If this *present* relation to God does not secure *present* holiness

and happiness, it cannot appear that the *future* existence of this relation to God, will *necessarily* secure *future* holiness and happiness. Thus you see, that in whatever point of light your argument be viewed, it fails of its object. Would a wise man, travelling to an unknown land, rely upon relations which had failed to secure his best interests and make him comfortable in his native country? If not, how unwise must travellers to the spirit world be, to rely for holiness and happiness there, upon a relation which has failed to make them holy and happy in this world.

2. God is the Father of true Christians or believers, in a sense in which he is not the Father of all men, and it is this latter relation, and not the former, that involves holiness and happiness.

Though the relation of which you speak is acknowledged to exist, yet there is another sense in which we must be the children of God in order to be holy and happy, in which sense all men are not the children of God, and hence, it must appear that you found your argument upon a false basis. A few Scripture quotations will show that it is not the general relation which all men sustain to God as their Creator, that secures holiness and happiness, but the relation which believers sustain to him by adoption, in contradistinction from the rest of the human family.

John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." Here it is seen that they were not the sons of God, but became so through faith in the name of Jesus Christ.

Rom. viii. 14. "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." This clearly implies that all men are not led by the spirit of God, and that those who are not led by the spirit of God, are not the sons of God.

Verse 17. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." This supposes that all

are not children and that those who are not children, are not heirs of God, or joint heirs, with Jesus Christ. How much out of place is it then for you to argue the salvation of all men from a relation which does not constitute them heirs. They might have been heirs of God by creation, but they have forfeited their heirship by sin, and now they must become the children of God by adoption through faith in Christ Jesus to become heirs, and hence, salvation cannot be argued from the relation we sustain to God by creation, but depends upon the relation saints sustain to him by adoption, in which sense all are not the children of God.

Gal. iii. 26. "For ye are all the children of God by faith." This was addressed to the church and not to the world of unbelievers, and shows that no man can be a child of God in a gospel sense without faith, and as "all men have not faith," it shows that all are not the children of God in the sense in which the apostles used the term.

Chap. iv. 4, 5. "God sent forth his Son made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The relation from which you reason existed prior to the time of God's sending forth his Son to redeem us, and yet it was necessary that he should do it, *"that we might receive the adoption of sons."* How perfectly plain then is it, that you found your argument upon the wrong relation. If all men were the children of God by creation, in a sense which secures their holiness and happiness, why was it necessary for God to send forth his Son to redeem us that we might receive the adoption of sons? You may say that because God was the Father of all men by creation, therefore he sent forth his Son to redeem them. This is granted, but the fact proves that this relation does not involve their holiness and happiness, the point you have undertaken to prove, and further, that it is necessary for them to become the children of God in another sense by receiving the adoption of sons in order to be holy and happy. Now if

you will prove that all men do receive the adoption of sons, you will gain the argument; but when you do this, your argument drawn from the prior relation as Creator and Creature will appear uncalled for and out of place.

1. John iii. 10. "In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." This shows that some are the children of God and some the children of the devil, and that those who are the children of the devil are not the children of God, *in a gospel sense*. I trust I have now fully proved the fact, that all men are not the children of God *in the true Christian sense*, and as they must be his children in this sense in order to be holy and happy, arguments drawn from other existing relations fall short of their object.

It is worthy of remark that your argument is not a new one, and may be found in the Gospel of St. John, as coming from the wicked unbelieving Jews. Chap. viii. 41, 42. "We have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, if God were your Father, ye would love me." The Jews first affirmed that Abraham was their Father. This Jesus refuted by showing that they did not the works of Abraham. They then said they had "one Father, even God," and this the Saviour met and refuted as above, but it appears that it was no done to your satisfaction, for you have brought it forward again, with what success our readers must now judge.

I will now pay some brief attention to your second position. You say,

"My second position, is, *that our knowledge of God as a Father must be derived from what we know of the same relation among men.*" This I regard as a very strange position, and to it I object on the following grounds:

1. The relation between God and men, as Creator and Creature, is not the same as the relation between earthly parents and their children, and hence, to undertake to infer the nature or the obligations of the one from the other, must be

extremely fallacious. God is the Creator of all men, but parents are not the creators of their children. It cannot be denied that like relations must involve like obligations; if, therefore, children sustain the same relation to their earthly parents that all men do to God as their Creator, they must be under the same obligations to their parents that all men are under to God, a position at war with both piety and common sense. This must suppose that the same persons sustain the same relations to two distinct parties, each relation involving absolute sovereignty on one hand, and absolute obedience on the other, for no one will deny that God is an absolute sovereign and that all men are required to render absolute obedience to him. The very fact that the son sustains the relation of a son to his earthly father, and at the same time sustains the relation to God of which you speak, proves that the relations cannot be the same, and, of course, the proper action resulting from them may not be the same.

2. Your position overlooks the Bible as the rule of evidence in this discussion. The question is not, does the relation between parents and children in this world teach, &c., but "do the *Scriptures* teach the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind?" Should you say that the *Scriptures* teach us the nature of the relation of parents and children, that our knowledge of this relation is first derived from the *Scriptures*, and then we are to derive "our knowledge of God as a Father from what we know of the same relation among men?" I reply, the *Scriptures* reveal the relation we sustain to God as a Father, as clearly as they do the relation between parents and children, hence it would be just as sound to infer the relation we sustain to earthly parents from the relation we sustain to God, as it is to infer the relation we sustain to God from the relation we sustain to earthly parents, and to do both these would be fallacious, as you cannot deny. If then your argument is intended to be founded upon the *Scriptures*, you must learn the relation from what the *Scriptures*

tures say on the subject, and not "from what we know of the same relation among men." The truth is, the same relation does not and cannot exist among men, as I have shown above. It is true the two relations may be expressed in the use of the same words, but every one knows that the relations are as widely different from each other, as the work of God differs from the work of men.

3. The only true and safe knowledge we can have of God as a Father, must be derived from the Bible, and from what we see actually come to pass under the divine government. I had rather have one "thus saith the Lord" on the subject, than to be informed a thousand times that my father begat me, or that my mother nourished me. And what I see actually come to pass under the divine government, what I see from matter of fact that God does, furnishes more proof to my mind of what we are to expect, than all the acts that parents have performed to their children, had I the whole written in a book from the time Eve mourned over the first remnant of mortality to the present day.

I shall close this review of your first letter by noticing a few minor points in your argument. I trust I have already shown that the grand principles upon which your argument rest are unsound, and, of course, your argument must fall; and would my space permit I would now show that the detail of your reasoning is as fallacious as the grand principles, but I have room for only a few points as illustrations.

You quote our Lord's prayer, "Our father which art in heaven," to prove that God recognizes all men as his children, but this text comes short of your purpose. It cannot be supposed that this prayer was ever intended to be used by the profane, the unbelieving, the drunkard, and whore-monger. It was designed for those who are the children of God by adoption, as were the disciples whom Jesus taught thus to pray, in which sense I have shown all men are not the children of God. Because true christians are instructed to call

God their Father when they pray, furnishes no proof that God is the Father of sinners in the same sense, who never pray, unless it be in the use of profane and blasphemous language. It appears to be a common error, to apply to all men those passages of Scripture which relate only to true christians or believers in Christ Jesus.

Again, you quote Matt. vii. 9—11 to prove the parental tenderness of God. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" On this it may be remarked,

1. It was addressed to the disciples who were the children of God by adoption, and therefore it does not prove God to be the Father of unbelievers in a gospel sense.

2. It gives us no assurance that God will bestow any good thing only upon such as "*ask him*." You attempt to meet this difficulty thus: "If it be said that God, in the relation of Father, will give only on the condition of being asked, I reply, that if an earthly father were to give only on condition of verbal petition, the feeble infant and dumb child would be excluded from his blessing."

Suppose this all be true of earthly parents, it does not alter the saying or meaning of the text; it still says that God will "*give good things to them that ask him*," and the fact that infants and dumb children would be excluded from an earthly parent's blessing, if they were to give only on being asked, cannot make God mean that he will give to those who *do not ask*, when he says he will give to them who *do ask*.

But your illustration does not quite meet the case, for infants can cry, and usually salute the light of time with vocal accents, and I venture the assertion that the children of God are never still born into his family, but are born praying. And as to dumb children, God never has any; his children can all ask him.

"Long as they live should christians pray;
They learn to pray when first they live."

A prayerless soul never was and never will be born into the kingdom of God, and the text simply affirms that God will give good things to them that *ask him*; it affirms nothing more, nothing less.

With these remarks I will close this reply, having, as I believe, shown that the considerations which you have urged are not sufficient to justify us and our readers in resting our hopes upon them for the future world. You say you shall in your next letter invite my attention to direct testimony from holy writ. I assure you, sir, I have unbounded confidence in the Scriptures, and by their teaching I hope ever to be willing to abide.

Firmly believing in the salvation of "every one that believeth," I subscribe myself respectfully yours,

LUTHER LEE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

DEAR SIR:—In replying to your review of my argument on the Divine Paternity, I shall endeavor to observe an acceptable arrangement of the items.

1. Notwithstanding a very clear statement of my first position, namely, that "God is the *Father* of the whole human family," you say, "I freely admit that God is the *Creator* of all mankind;" and you proceed with your argument as though this were the proposition I endeavored to establish. In at least six instances, you mention God as the *Creator* and man as the *creature*; and you reason as though I inferred the final holiness and happiness of all mankind from this relation? Did not the thought occur to you, that God is the *Creator* of beasts and insects, as well as of mankind?

A heathen poet said, and Paul adopted the sentiment, "For we also are His offspring," Acts xvii. So far as you overlook this relation of Father and offspring, (a relation very different from that of *Creator* and *creature*,) you do not touch my argument.

2. In indulging your taste for book-syllogism, you disjoined my first and second positions, though thus separated my argument is incomplete; and then, arranging the major and minor to suit yourself, you affixed a conclusion which I have not attempted to draw from these premises. If you admit that God is the Father of the whole human family, and that this relation, existing independently of moral character, can never be dissolved, you must admit that God will *always* be the Father of the whole human family. Had you thus stated the syllogism, you would have displayed either greater logical acuteness, or more candor. A disputant can gain no perma-

nent advantage by erroneously stating his opponent's reasoning.

3. In reviewing a portion of my argument, you say, "there is no connection between the premises and the conclusion. The premises are, "God is the Father of the whole human family"—the conclusion is, "all mankind will be finally holy and happy."

I reply, that if God be in a true and proper sense, the Father of all,—in other words, if God feels for all His offspring a love corresponding to the love of an earthly father,—there is a necessary connection between His spirit and power, and the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. It is true, this result is not yet attained; many of His offspring are still unholy and unhappy—but you overlook the fact, that His paternal designs are not completed in a day. His love, as the universal Father, is far-reaching and comprehensive; and, viewing his economy in the light of an earthly father's affection, I behold the necessary connection which you deny.

The substance of your argument on the existence of evil, was anticipated in my first letter. To the remarks then offered, and to which I invite your attention, I subjoin the following:

That God is, in at least the primary sense of that relation the Father of all, you do not deny, and that evil exists, no one can doubt. May we not safely infer that God in permitting evil to exist, had such an end in view as would be approved by the best earthly father, if all the bearings of its existence were clearly understood?

I do not agree with you that what is consistent with the relation of Father and offspring *at one time*, may *always* be consistent with it. Temporary evil may be, and doubtless is, consistent with the Divine Paternity; but evil as a *final result*, is quite a different matter.

5. The final *holiness* of all mankind implies that they will become the children of God *in spirit and character*. I have

inferred this result not from any man's present attainments, but from the spirit and power of God as the Father of all.

To this you object, and you quote several passages of Scripture to prove that none are, and none can ever become the children of God, excepting "by faith in Jesus Christ," thus receiving the adoption of sons; and that for those only who acquire this new relation in the present life, can there be any assurance of final holiness and happiness.

That some of mankind are the children of God in a sense, in which some others are not, there cannot be any doubt; but neither infants nor idiots are of the number. If your position above noted be correct, none of these so living or dying, can ever become the children of God in any such sense as to secure their holiness and happiness! And what will become of the millions of heathen who have lived and died without so much as hearing of the Redeemer? According to your view, there can be neither holiness nor happiness for a single soul of them, because they did not acquire, in *this* life, the character of children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. A correct exposition of the passage you have cited, cannot sanction any such appalling result. Yet this is the plain result of your exposition.

Very different is the view your correspondent. Whoever becomes a child of God in spirit and character, whether it be to-day or to-morrow, is indebted therefor to Our Father, in the leading sense of that relation; and my inference is, that if he be actuated by the feelings proper to a father, He will bring all His offspring into such union to himself as will secure their holiness and happiness, *in His own time and way.*

6. You seem to think that my argument on the divine paternity, was confuted by our Saviour, in a conversation with "the wicked unbelieving Jews." You will perceive your error, if you will but note the distinction between being the children of God in the primary sense, and being His children in spirit and character. In the latter sense, Jesus denied that

the Jews were the children of Abraham; yet in the same conversation he said to those very persons, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.*" John viii.

7. You deny that the invocation of our Lord's prayer can rightly be used by wicked men. I reply, that it would be solemn mockery in any man to pray for the forgiveness of his sins, without being conscious of sins as yet unpardoned; and inasmuch as the petition, "Forgive us our sins," may rightly be addressed to "Our Father in heaven," we have authority for saying that God is the Father of such as are *sinners*. Make what distinction you please between those who are, and those who are not the children of God in a peculiar sense; still the fact remains that *sinners* are authorized to say, "Our Father."

8. You enter a denial of my second position, which you consider a very strange one. Your first objection treats of the relation of *Creator* and *creature*, and may therefore be dismissed without comment. Your second objection supposes that I may appeal to the Scriptures for "the nature of the relation of parents and children;" and in this way bring my argument within the scope of our question. In this you greatly err. It is to our knowledge of a father's love—a knowledge *not* derived from revelation—that the Bible appeals. It is to the glowing affection already existing in a father's heart that the appeal is made; *that affection* being an indication of the love of God. Your third objection assumes that "the only true and safe knowledge we can have of God as a Father, must be derived from the Bible." I reply, that had we no knowledge of man as a father, all that the Bible says of God as a Father would be utterly unintelligible. You consider my position a strange one—yet a denial of it would make of the Scriptures a sealed book, as far as they treat of God in the paternal relation. Father is not an unmeaning word. It denotes one of the most endearing relations among men; and when applied to the Supreme Being, a father's heart must be the exponent of its meaning.

9. To the MULTITUDE, as well as to his *disciples*, our Saviour said, "One is *your* Father which is in heaven." Matt. xxiii. i. 9. Undoubtedly there were many unbelievers in that multitude of people—yet God was their Father. Jesus might have reasoned with that multitude precisely as he did with the persons addressed in Matt. vii. and with equal propriety. *Your Father* is the language employed in both cases.

Your remark that God has never any dumb children, is merely an evasion. Dumb persons cannot ask for any thing in the ordinary sense of that word; yet they may feel a sense of need—and this is asking, in the sight of God.

Our Saviour does not teach, as you imply, that God will give *only* to those who ask, and only on the condition of being asked. How many thousand blessings do we receive from Him, without petitioning! yea, without feeling any sense of need! Not merely in the general boundaries of Providence, but in the plan of grace, how innumerable are the blessings we enjoy, without asking. Your view of our Saviour's testimony cannot be the correct one, because it is contradictory of facts.

The comparison is between man as a father and God as a Father, and not between asking and not asking. The spirit of it is simply this: if earthly fathers, who are evil, provide for all their children, our heavenly Father will as *much more* give good gifts unto His needy offspring as He is better than they.

I have thus briefly reviewed your letter in several items.

I will now introduce a few direct testimonies of Holy Writ, in proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind.

Colossians i. 19, 20: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

The phrase "all things" here used, is among the most com-

prehensive expressions employed in the Scriptures. That it denotes universality, will be rendered apparent by consulting the preceding context. "By him were *all things* created.....*all things* were created by him and for him.....he is before *all things*, and by him *all things* consist.....that in *all things* he might have pre-eminence." The same expressive phrase occurs in the text: "By him to reconcile *all things* to himself."

There is no allusion to worlds, or stones, or cattle—but to the rational offspring of God. None other than unreconciled beings need to be reconciled; and hence I judge that the phrase comprehends only unreconciled beings. The expression, "whether they be things in earth or things in heaven," was designed to intimate and enforce the comprehensiveness of the phrase all things; and the text thus explained, teaches that it pleased *the Father* to institute means for the reconciliation of all unreconciled beings to Himself, wherever they may be; and he who in all things has the pre-eminence, and in whom all fulness dwelt, is the agent by whom this universal reconciliation is to be effected. To this, the Father gave all things into his hand, John iii. 35, and appointed him heir of all things, Heb. i. 2.

I presume it will be granted that they who become reconciled to God, in the sense of the text, will be holy and happy; and since a universal reconciliation is here declared as the result of means which it pleased the Father to employ, I can but believe in the final holiness and happiness of all mankind.

2 Corinthians v. 18, 19: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ; and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

As in the preceding passage, so in this, we are informed that some had already been reconciled. The same fact is communicated in Romans v. 11: "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the

atonement." This is the only place in the New Testament, as you are aware, in which the word atonement occurs. Elsewhere, the same Greek term is translated reconciliation. Paul and his brethren had already been reconciled; they had received the at-one-ment, and greatly rejoiced in the blessing. The atonement had been received by *them*, and not by the Supreme Being. Man, not God, was the unreconciled party; and man only could receive the benefit of the Saviour's mediation.

But the work of reconciliation, though commenced, was not completed in apostolic times, "God was in Christ *reconciling the world unto Himself.*"

I presume you admit that "the world" here mentioned comprehends all unreconciled persons; and also that the reconciliation proposed implies the holiness and happiness of all its recipients. The only point of debate between you and me, is, Will all unreconciled persons be ultimately reconciled to God?

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." by what means? I answer by the revelation of His unfathomable love for man, for *sinners*, Rom. v. 6—9: and in that love we have an assurance that the world shall ultimately be reconciled. The same principle that prompted the enterprise, is at work in the progress of it, and will not be satisfied until universal renovation be effected.

If you object, that, notwithstanding the means employed, many are yet unreconciled and unsubdued by the Saviour, I reply, that thousands have been reconciled since the Apostle wrote; "but even now *we see not yet all things put under him,*" Heb. ii. 8. Can we safely infer from the fact that all things are not *now* subordinated to the Saviour, that they never *will be*? "God is in Christ *reconciling* (that is engaged in effecting the reconciliation of) the world to Himself;" and He will accomplish the work in the "times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." The wisdom by

which the plan was devised, is competent to devise the requisite means for its accomplishment; and the grace that gathered the first fruits in the days of the apostles, is abundantly able to bring in the sheaves of the universal harvest.

In the faith, hope and love of this sublime consummation, I
am respectfully yours,

ABEL C. THOMAS.

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR:—Your second letter is before me, and as you have divided your reply into distinct parts, denoted by figures, 1, 2, 3, &c., I will observe the same order in replying, that you and our readers may the more readily refer to those parts of your letter to which my remarks relate. The figures refer to the divisions of your letter.

1. You complain that I substitute the term Creator for that of Father. If your argument be sound, I had a right so to do. I stated your argument in your own words, which was that God is the Father of all men because he created them in his own image. Now I admitted that God did create man in his own image, and that He is the Father of all men, so far as paternity is necessarily involved in creation, and further than this, your argument did not extend, because it was founded on the fact that God did thus create man. After this statement the terms Creator and Father become interchangeable, so that the substitution of the one for the other does not in the least affect the argument. If when I used the term Creator, I did not say as much as I did when I said Father, then you must have reasoned falsely, when you said that God was Father because he created man in his own image.

2. You intimate that my logic or candor is defective, because I drew the conclusion that all men will be finally holy and happy from your premises, rather than that God will always be the Father of all men. That God will be the Father of all men forever, so far as paternity follows from Creation, I then did, and I do now admit, but this all fails of your purpose unless you add to it, *therefore* all men

will be finally holy and happy. No premises which will not justify this conclusion can sustain your side of the question, and as you complain of me, for drawing this conclusion from your premises, you fairly give up the argument, so far as the divine paternity is concerned, unless you will draw a conclusion which, if drawn by me, impeaches my logic or my candor.

3. You say, "if God be in a true and proper sense,—in other words, if God feels for all his offspring a love corresponding to the love of an earthly Father—there is a necessary connection between His spirit and power, and the final holiness and happiness of all mankind." You say there is such a necessary connection, but you do not *prove* it. Matter of fact contradicts it, for God's spirit and power are as efficient now as they ever will be; hence, as the present paternal feelings of God in connection with his present spirit and power do not produce present holiness and happiness, as some sinners "wax worse and worse," it cannot appear that there is any necessary connection between these and the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. You also make an appeal to my paternal feelings, saying, "You, sir, are a father. We will suppose you to be also the supreme lawgiver and judge of all your children," &c. What I would do were I possessed of perfect wisdom and holiness; it must require perfect wisdom and holiness to determine, and therefore it is not for you nor me to decide; but had I the power with my present paternal feelings, I should make all my children holy and happy now without another hour's delay; but God who is almighty does not make his children holy and happy now, therefore my paternal feelings are no proof of what God will do.

But you say "if God be in a *true and proper sense* the Father of all," &c. Here your whole argument depends upon the doubtful word *if*. But what do you mean by a "*true and proper sense*?" I admitted in my letter that God is the Father of all in your sense, viz: by virtue of creation, but I proved that God is not the Father of all in a gospel sense.

4. You deny "that evil in the government of God is a *final result*." But what do you mean by evil as a final result? If you mean that the whole system of God's government will eventuate in more good than evil, I perfectly agree with you, but if you mean that there will be no degree of final evil under the government of God, you simply *deny* the point you should disprove, and denial is no argument. You fairly admit the existence of evil, to be consistent with the paternal relation for which you argue, and being consistent with it now, it may always remain consistent with it, unless the nature of evil or the nature of that relation shall change. But you say "I do not agree with you that what is consistent with the relation of Father and offspring at *one time* may *always* be consistent with it." I did not expect you would agree with me, but your disagreement is no proof that I am wrong, for you differ as much from me as I do from you: hence, it goes as far to prove you wrong as it does to prove me wrong. But you attempt to evade the force of my argument on this point, by making a distinction between *temporary* and *final evil*. The first you say "is consistent with the divine paternity." Now this distinction exists only in your imagination, so far as moral principle is concerned. There is no difference between temporary and final evil in its nature, for "evil as a final result," is nothing more nor less than what you call temporary evil, continued. Take any one sin, suppose a man to live in the practice of profane swearing ten years, this you would call a temporary evil; suppose then he swears as long as he lives, it is temporary still, nor does it change its nature; suppose then he swears perpetually, or as long as his being lasts, it does not alter the nature of swearing; it is no less consistent with divine paternity during any one period of that existence, than it is during the first ten years, during which you admit that it is consistent with the divine paternity. As evil is the same in its nature, whether it be of short, long or endless duration, if it be consistent with

the divine paternity that it should exist ten years, it may be consistent that it should exist a hundred, a thousand, a million, *ad infinitum*. You greatly err, in my humble opinion, in considering temporary evil a very different matter from what you call "evil as a final result," for the latter is nothing more than the former lengthened out or persisted in by the evil doer.

If a man commits an endless evil during the whole of this life then evil is a final result of this life; and the same remark is applicable to the future world, as you admitted in your first letter that evil will probably exist in the future world.

5. Of the final holiness of all mankind you say, "I have inferred this result not from any man's present attainments, but from the spirit and power of God as a Father of all." This I knew before, and this constitutes your grand fallacy, as was shown in my letter. How futile to "infer the final holiness and happiness of all men from the spirit and power of God as a Father of all," when the present attainments and characters of men show that such a result does not necessarily attend the spirit and power of God. Some men are perpetually growing more unholy and unhappy in despite of "the spirit and power of God, as a Father of all," and hence your inference is perfectly groundless, and your whole argument falls, unless you can prove that the spirit and power of God, will make all men holy and happy, which you must prove independently of the simple existence of the spirit and power of God as a Father.

You say, "whoever becomes a child of God in spirit and character, is indebted therefor to our Father in the leading sense of that relation." He is indebted to the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, for St. Paul said; "by the grace of God I am what I am." But this even does not necessarily imply the holiness and happiness of all men, for some are represented as receiving the grace of God in vain, and others for whom Christ died, as perishing.

6. Your remark about the Jews being the children of Abra-

ham falls short of its object, for I showed that Christ declared that they were not the children of God, in reply to which you show that he admitted that they were the children of Abraham, that is, the natural descendants of Abraham. They were his natural seed, but not his spiritual seed, and therefore not heirs with him to the spiritual blessings.

7. You say, "God is the Father of such as are *sinners*." Wonderful discovery! The question here is not are the children of God by faith, in some sense sinners, but are impenitent sinners, the children of God by faith? We may easily suppose that the children of God by faith may have occasion to pray, "forgive us our sins," without supposing the prayer of which this forms a part is designed for these impenitent sinners who are not the children of God by faith.

8. Of my denial of your second position you say, "Your first objection treats of the relation of *Creator* and *creature*, and may therefore be dismissed without comment." But your whole argument depends upon the supposition that the relation of Creator and creature, as it exists between God and man, is a paternal relation, and therefore, by dismissing my objection without comment, you dismiss your argument as invalid and wide of the point.

What you say to my second objection is wide of the mark. There would be some propriety in your remark, if the fact of God's paternal love were the point at issue between us, but the real issue is the influence which it exerts over the moral character of man. I admit the existence of God's paternal love, but I deny that all men will therefore be holy and happy; you must therefore prove the connection between the two from the Scriptures.

Your remark in reply to my third objection surprises me! You say "had we no knowledge of man as a father, all that the Bible says of God as a Father would be utterly unintelligible." To this I reply, that did the Bible teach us nothing of God as a Father, all that we know of man as a father would

give us no knowledge of the divine paternity, therefore, it is from the Bible after all, that we must learn the character of God as a Father, as I contended in my letter. That you should persist in your position that we are to derive our knowledge of God as a Father, from what we know of the same relation among men, surprises me. What do we know of the relation among men, save what the Bible teaches us? You, sir, not being a father, cannot know any thing about the relation, only what you see fathers do and here they say. And what do you see them do, from whence you infer the character of God as a Father? How few are there who do all for their children which they might and ought to do? How many parents of your acquaintance discharge their whole duty to their children? while many actually lead them in the way of sin and death, while others abandon them, and others still actually kill and destroy their own offspring? Do you learn the relation from what fathers tell you, as you never had the feelings of a father? How do you know that they speak the truth? Does not conduct speak louder than words? You can know nothing of the relation only from its results, and do the results, just referred to, give you views of the divine paternity honorable to God, and safe as the foundation of your hope for eternity? If you would honor God, or impart hope to man from a consideration of the divine paternity, you must derive your knowledge of that paternity from some other source than what we know of the same relation among men.

9." You say that Christ said to the multitude "one is your Father which is in heaven," Matt. xxiii. 1. 9. This I never denied, I only denied that the text you quoted before, was spoken to impenitent sinners, or intended to be used by them. That God is the Father of all men, I have admitted, and that he is not the Father of all men in another sense you have admitted. Now if Christ used the term Father in Matt. xxiii. 9, in the sense of which God is the Father of all men, it

proves nothing more than I admit, and does not prove the final holiness and happiness of all men, because it is the other relation by adoption that secures these; and if Christ used the term Father in the sense in which God is the Father of true believers only, the text proves no more than that that multitude were the children of God by faith, but what has that to do with the holiness and happiness of those who are not his children in this sense?

You ask, "Do you admit that the Supreme Being is, in any true and proper sense, the Father of all mankind?" Answer. If by a "true and proper sense," you mean in the sense of Creator, I say yes; but if you mean in the sense of adoption through faith, I say no. My answer to your other question respecting the perpetuity of this relation, and its obligation will be in season when you shall have informed me which of the relations you refer to, named in my answer to your first question.

I have now said all that my space will allow on the subject of your argument, drawn from the divine paternity, and I think I have said enough. Indeed I believe I entirely removed the foundation of your argument in my first letter, and you have not met me and refuted one of my main positions. I will now fill what little space remains by a brief notice of what you call your direct evidence.

You quote Col. i. 19, 20. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." This I understand to be the only text you intend as direct evidence; those that follow being merely designed to illustrate and confirm your views of this. Though I object to your application of this text, and to much of your reasoning upon it, I have not room to controvert your positions in detail, but will briefly show that the whole comes short of the object for which you labor. The text simply

speaks of the purpose of God in giving his son to die for the sins of the world, which was that he might reconcile all things unto himself by Christ. That Christ died for all I admit, that the design or plan contemplates, in its provisions, the reconciliation of all men to God, I also freely admit; but it does not follow from thence that all are or ever will be reconciled; for they, as moral agents, refuse to comply with the terms of reconciliation, and resist the very means which God employs to reconcile them to himself. This appears from 2d Cor. v. 19. 20, a part of which you have quoted. To-wit, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." If there was not something to be done by the sinner in order to be reconciled to God, why beseech him on the subject? As the Apostle besought sinners to be reconciled to God, in Christ's stead, it is certain that it was the purpose of God that they should have been reconciled then, and as many of them were not reconciled, it is equally clear that God's purpose to reconcile all things unto himself, is a conditional one, requiring the repentance and submission of sinners, as moral agents, and therefore does not secure the holiness and happiness of any only such as repent and believe. It is God's declared will that all should be reconciled now, but they are not.

Yours truly,

LUTHER LEE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

DEAR SIR:—I have several times desired you to avoid confounding the relations of Creator and Father—yet you persist in considering these terms interchangeable. You say, “I have admitted that God is the Father of all men, so far as paternity is necessarily involved in creation;” and you also admit that “He will be the Father of all men forever, so far as paternity follows from creation.”

But this does not meet my position. Paternity is *not* necessarily involved in simple creation, for God created beasts and birds and insects; but He is not their Father, nor are they his children in *any* sense. Between God and all created things there exists the relation of Creator and creature: between God and mankind there is the *additional relation* of Father and offspring. This you have admitted; and since my argument is predicated on the paternal relation, your substitution of the term Creator for that of Father, tends only to an evasion of the true issue.

You say, however, that “God is not the Father of all, in a gospel sense;” and much of your last letter is based in the assumption of this position, without so much as informing me what you mean by it. Are *you* the father of some of your children in a sense in which you are not the father of them all? If you are, I shall be glad to know what that sense is. It is granted, that the obedient of your offspring are your children in *character*, which the disobedient are not; but the primary relation undergoes no change.

Some of mankind are the children of God in a sense in which some others are not, viz:—by faith in Jesus Christ, and

by obedience. "Love your enemies . . . that ye *may be* the children of *your Father*," that is, that ye may be *like* Him, Matt. v. 45. But does your position above noted, imply a change in *Him* corresponding to the improvements in *them*?

Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," John xv. 14—but it is not herein implied that if they did *not* obey him, he would not be *their* friend. James said, "Whosoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God," iv. 4—but we are not hence to infer that God will be the enemy of such an one.

The unchangeability of God is a fundamental doctrine of divine revelation; and no exposition of any scriptural passage can be admitted, which involves a denial that He is without variableness or shadow of turning. All the actual change must be in man.

You do not deny that "whoever becomes a child of God in spirit and character, is indebted therefor to our Father," in the sense in which you admit Him to be the Father of all. It is true, you say, "he is indebted to the grace of God"—but you do not intend to deny that the whole plan of redemption is based in the love of the universal Father. It was because His children, that is, the whole human family, were partakers of flesh and blood, that Jesus took part of the same, Heb. ii. 14; it was by the grace of God that he who is "the head of every man," "tasted death for every man," Heb. ii. 9; 1 Cor. xi. 3; it was to sinners, to enemies, the love of God was thus commended, Rom. v. 6-8; it was to manifest His fatherly love to His children dead in sins, that the Father of all, spared not His own Son, Rom. viii. 32.

You infer the final holiness and happiness of some, from the fact that they are now the children of God by faith; but the question is, To what are they indebted for what they *now are*? You cannot avoid perceiving that the whole matter must be referred to the original relation. Limerely claim for all the

offspring of God, what you maintain has already been accomplished for a part.

My *second* position—namely, that “our knowledge of God as a Father must be derived from what we know of the same relation among men”—seems very greatly to surprise you; and I assure you that your denial of it is to me a matter of equal surprise.

The Bible treats largely of the light as a symbol of truth, and the like. Suppose I were to affirm that all this is utterly unintelligible to a man who was born blind, and continues to be blind,—would the affirmation surprise you?

I grant, that were it not for the Bible we might be ignorant of *the fact* that God is the Father of all—(albeit the heathen seem to have had knowledge of this divine relation, Acts xvii. 20;) and if this be all you intended to assert, in your denial of my position, we do not disagree. But if *the fact* of the divine paternity be not addressed to what we know of the paternal relation among men, we are in a predicament corresponding to that of the blind man. To *him*, the rainbow, as a sign of the new covenant, has no meaning; and to *us*, (in view of your denial,) all that the Bible declares of God as a Father, and all its glowing appeals to parental love, can be considered little short of unmeaning mockery.

It is true, I am not a father; nevertheless, I was long enough the object of a father's solicitude, to understand clearly what is signified by the parental bond. His earthly pilgrimage has terminated—but the memory of his love is embalmed in the holiest sanctuary of my heart.

It is granted, that many fathers fail to discharge their whole duty to their children; but do you seriously consider this a stumbling block in the way of my argument? Which of the twain would you consider the fittest representation of God—the *best* earthly father, or the *worst*? Sir, the best father on earth is the fittest representation of the Father of all—but even *he* falls infinitely short of the reality. Not the ostrich,

"which leaveth her eggs in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them;" but the heart of the father in whom parental love is the most holy and vital, shall be the exponent of the love of our Father. Little as I know of my correspondent, I will hazard the choice of *him* as an example. You have assured us that, had you the requisite power to accomplish all your desires, there would be a necessary connection between your love as a father, and the holiness and happiness of all your children, however disobedient they at present may be. I believe you; and herein I discover an approximation to the fathomless love of the Universal Father.

Do you still inquire what I mean by the statement that God is, *in a true and proper sense*, the Father of all? I mean by it, that the term Father, is applied to the Supreme Being, is not a mere unmeaning word. I mean by it that He feels for all His offspring a mightier and holier love than you profess for your's; and that all His plans are in perfect harmony with the spirit of universal paternity.

Your principal objection to my inference from the preceding premises, is derived from the present existence of evil. Several forms of this objection were anticipated in my first letter; but you have yielded no sort of attention to my replies. Probably you will be prepared to notice them, after I have answered your question, "What do you mean by evil as a final result?"

Evil as a final result, is an ultimate condition, an absolute end, a fixed and permanent termination in evil. I have denied the existence of any such evil in the Divine government; for the plain reason that the introduction or permission of evil as a final result, would be wholly incompatible with the perfections of God as the *Father of all*. He constituted all His offspring precisely as he saw fit, possessing a perfect knowledge of all the bearings and results of the voluntary act; and to deny that evil belongs merely to *the progress* of His plan,

or to imply that evil exists in His government as an absolute end, is an impeachment of either the wisdom and power of the Supreme God, or of His love as the Universal Father.

It was consistent with the divine paternity that the well-beloved of the Father should suffer the agonies of the garden and the cross; but that the continuance of these agonies, even until this day, would have been equally consistent, is more than you will venture to affirm. Yet, according to your own showing, his sufferings were a final evil, and might have been as consistently perpetuated, even without end, as allowed for an hour!

It was consistent with the divine paternity to permit the wicked sale of Joseph, with all the miseries incident thereto; but it was consistent only as a temporary evil, and in view of the good into which the transaction was subsequently resolved.

Had we been consulted in the premises, we would have been incompetent to determine positively whether the permission of that evil would be the best means of accomplishing the end designed. But had we been asked whether the permission of that evil, not as a means of good, but as a final result, would be inconsistent with the acknowledged perfection of God, we would have been as competent to decide as we are to determine whether positive evil be positive good.

An acknowledgment of the infinite wisdom and power of God, must be associated with the fact that He is the Father of the whole human family. The latter position involves the sentiment that the proposed issue of the Divine government is perfectly harmonious with parental love: the former is a guarantee that the wisest and best means have been devised, and that the plan proposed will ultimately be completed.

I do not restrict the operations of the holy spirit to the brief span of human life—neither do you; yet I have neither affirmed nor denied that evil will probably exist in the future world. The time when, the place where, and the means by which

"universal renovation will be effected, I am not wise enough to determine. You admit final holiness and happiness for millions who do not in this life, become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ; and my faith simply goes beyond yours, in regard to the efficiency of the Universal Father's love.

In your review of my direct testimonies, you admit that the gospel was instituted with a view to the reconciliation of all things to God; that the design and plan of it contemplated this glorious end; in short, that it was the purpose of God thereby to effect the final holiness and happiness of all mankind.

I presume you admit that this result was embraced in the original design, plan and purpose of the Supreme Being—that is, that the gospel was not a scheme devised in an unforeseen emergency, to accomplish an end not provided for in the beginning; but that it is a part of the grand whole originally intended by the Deity.

Thus far we agree; and I am happy to know that you concede so truly paternal a design, plan a purpose to the Almighty. In this large economy we discover the loving spirit of the Universal Father; and the fulness of the blessing proposed, leaves nothing to be desired on the simple score of His *object* in creation and redemption.

But you deny that the design, plan, and purpose of God will ever be consummated.

This denial of yours brought the following passage vividly to my remembrance: "Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient to finish it?* Lest, haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and *was not able to finish.*" Luke xiv. 28-30.

You concede that the Supreme Being devised the plan of universal reconciliation; that He had perfect knowledge of all the circumstances, and of all the combinations of circum-

stances; which could possibly intervene: that He began the work with full design and purpose to complete it; but, alas! He is not able to finish it. As to His disposition in the case, it is perfect and entire, lacking nothing. He anxiously desires the completion of the sublime plan; but He is not able to finish it. There are difficulties, either incidental or accidental, which He cannot remove; and so the final purpose of Almighty God must be forever marred!

When we consider the limited knowledge, and wisdom and power of man, we do not marvel that many of his plans should be wholly defeated. He cannot possibly foresee all the difficulties to be encountered; or if he foresees them, he may not be sufficiently wise to devise means for their removal; or if the means be devised, he may lack energy and perseverance in the use of the means—and so his plans are frequently frustrated, leaving him to mourn over the wreck of his hopes.

But shall we affirm that the All-knowing was ignorant of the obstacles to be overcome, when He formed the design, plan and purpose of universal reconciliation? or, admitting all the obstacles to have been perfectly unveiled before Him, shall we imply that He was incompetent to devise means for their removal? or, conceding infinity to His wisdom, shall we deny Him the energy and perseverance requisite to the fulfilment of His final purpose?

It is freely granted that men are moral agents, and that they have ever been, are now, and ever will be, treated and governed as such. What then? The means devised by infinite wisdom for the reconciliation of moral agents, were devised in full view of all obstructions, of every sort. The question is, are *the means* adequate to *the end*? It is nothing to say that men, "as moral agents, resist the very means which God employs to reconcile them to Himself"—for that very resistance is one of the obstacles to be removed. The plan, design, or purpose, reaches forward to universal reconciliation; and a de-

nial that universal reconciliation will be ultimately effected, is equivalent to saying that the means provided are inadequate to the end proposed.

"What king, going to make war with another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand men to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" Luke xiv. 31. You affirm, substantially, that God pursued universal reconciliation without considering all the intervening obstacles, or that the means provided are insufficient to remove them.

How widely different is the scriptural view! It pleased the Father to institute means for the reconciliation of all things; and God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, with the full assurance that "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Isaiah iv. 10. Is it any thing marvelous that universal reconciliation should be effected by the employment of means? or that a pleasure or purpose which shall prosper implies the use of *adequate* means?

You intimate, however, that the purpose of God is defeated, so far as mankind are not *now* reconciled. Referring to apostolic times, you say it was the purpose of God that the persons addressed should have been reconciled *then*; and as they were *not* reconciled at that time, you infer that the purpose of God is a conditional one, and that it is defeated so far as it is not accomplished.

When Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus. He said, "I have appeared unto thee *for this purpose*. to make thee a minister and witness." Acts xxvi. 16. Saul was not *immediately* made a minister; but does it follow that the purpose for which the Saviour appeared to him was defeated? or that it might fail of accomplishment?

"Declaring *the end from the beginning*, and from ancient times the things that are *not yet done*, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure I have purposed it; I will also do it." Isaiah xlv. The man (symbolized by

a ravenous bird) who was to execute the purpose here referred to, was a moral agent. However much or long he resisted the means employed to engage him in the execution of that purpose, he was ultimately brought to the work—and this, too without any violence having been offered to his moral agency.

An apostle considered the final subordination of all things so clearly an absolute purpose of God, that he spake of it as being already accomplished: "Thou hast put all things under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." Lest, however, the reader might regard present insubordination as an indication of failure in the divine purpose, the apostle subjoined, But now we see NOT YET all things put under him," Heb. ii. 8—thus intimating that the end *not yet* attained, will be effected in due time.

Saved by hope, and walking by faith and not by sight, I am respectfully yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR:—I proceed to review the most important parts of your letter, for the sake of filling out my own, notwithstanding I believe my first letter sufficient on the subject of the divine paternity. You commence thus:

“Dear Sir: I have several times desired you to avoid confounding the relations of Creator and Father—yet you persist in considering these terms interchangeable.”

I showed most clearly that as you argued the divine paternity from the fact that God created man in his own image, you must admit that the relation of Creator, in this sense, must be equivalent to the relation of Father, in the sense in which you argued that God is the father of all men. If you deny that the relation of Creator, in the sense of having created man in his own image, is equivalent to the relation of Father, in your sense, then you argued falsely, when you argued that God is the father of all men, because he created man in his own image. This, I say, was shown in my last, and yet without even attempting to meet the difficulty, you repeat your objection to my confounding the relations of Creator and Father. I trust our readers will duly appreciate this your course, and not be at a loss to understand its cause.

After partially quoting my reply, you say:

“But this does not meet my position. Paternity is not necessarily involved in simple creation—for God created beasts and birds and insects; but he is not their Father, nor are they His children, in any sense.”

It is not possible for me to see how you could have failed to know better than this. I did not rest my reply on the simple relation of Creator as it exists between God and brutes,

but upon the special relation of creator, as it exists between God and man, he having created man in his own image.

I said in my last, "I admit that God did create man in his own image," and yet you represent me as overlooking the fact that your argument was founded upon the circumstance that man was made in the image of God, and represent me as reasoning in a manner which would be equally applicable to "beasts and birds and insects." How could you do this? Was there no way for you to make out any thing like a defence of your argument without falsely representing my reply as overlooking the fact that man was created in the image of God? To settle this question forever, I hereby say that I wish all my reasonings on this subject to be understood in the view of the fact, that God did create man in his own image, in contradistinction from "beasts, and birds and insects," which were not created in the image of God; and when I speak of God's being the Father of all men, so far as paternity is involved in the relation of Creator and creature, I wish to be understood as speaking of the relation of Creator and creature as it exists between God and man, and not as it exists between God and horses, who were not created in the image of God. This distinction I make to accommodate myself to your views and arguments, and hope I shall hear no more complaints on the ground of confounding Creator with paternity.

You remark again as follows:

"You say, however, that 'God is not the Father of all, in a gospel sense;' and much of your last letter is based in the assumption of this position, without so much as informing me what you mean by it."

This was a point which I labored to prove in my first letter, and the very arguments which I employed, and the scripture proofs which I introduced, could not have failed to impart the information which you say I have withheld. I mean that all men are not the children of God, and that God is not their

Father, by their "being born again," John 1, 12 and iii. 3. "For ye are the children of God by faith," Gal. iii. 26. "That we might receive the adoption of sons," Gal. iv. 2. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," Rom. viii. 15. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," 1 Peter i. 8. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God," Rom. v. 1. "Every one that loveth him that begot, loveth him also that is begotten of him. He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," 1 John v. 1—18. The above Scriptures refer to the relation in view of which I deny that God is the Father of all men in a gospel sense. If the following question does not establish your character for wisdom you must try again.

"Are you the father of some of your children in a sense in which you are not the father of them all? If you are, I shall be glad to know what that sense is."

This question is so profound that it is deserving of an effort.

1. My children have not yet revolted from me so far as to be disinherited and cease to be my lawful heirs, rendering it necessary that they should by me be "begotten again," or be "born again" into my family, in order to have a claim on my estate; but God's children have thus revolted from him. "We were by nature the children of wrath even as others. At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Eph. ii. 3, 12, 19. "And if children, then heirs," Rom. viii. 17. If

my children had thus disinherited themselves, and I could and should, by "begetting them again," and by causing them to "be born again," re-instate them in my family, that is, some of them, I should be a father to them in a sense in which I should not be a father to the other children, who might by wilful resistance defeat the process of being begotten and born again. This is precisely the case with God and his children; they have all revolted, and he offers the Spirit by which they may be begotten and born again into his family, and some of them receive the Spirit, and are born again, while others "resist the Holy Ghost," and are not born again. Now my doctrine is that those who are born again, are the children of God, in a sense in which those are not, who are not born again: and all this without supposing that I am the father of some of my children in a sense in which I am not the father of them all, as your question implies.

2. I am not the father of my children in the sense in which God is the Father of all men, nor in the sense in which he is the Father of believers, for if I am, then my children must sustain the same relation to me that they and I sustain to God, and as like relations must involve like obligations, if my children sustain the same relation to me that they do to God, they must be under the same obligations to me that they are to God, which would be self-contradictory, as well as profane. This shows that the relations are not the same, and hence, your whole argument being based upon the assumption that they are the same, must fall to the ground.

3. This fact is further proved by your own question. It assumes that I cannot be the father of some of my children in a sense in which I am not the father of them all, yet I have clearly shown that God is the Father of some in a sense in which he is not the father of all, therefore the relation between God and his children cannot be the same as the relation between me and my children.

On your second position I shall say but little. In your

effort to sustain your position, that we are to derive our knowledge of God as a father from what we know of the same relation among men, you confound this relation among men as a matter of illustration of the divine paternity with its being the same relation, involving the same principles as the divine paternity. The fact that the relation of father and son is appealed to to illustrate the divine paternity, does not prove that the relations are the same, but that the one is easier of comprehension and more familiar than the other. Nor does it prove that the paternal relation is the source of our knowledge of God as a father, but it only serves to illustrate principles and facts on this subject derived from other sources.

The Scriptures appeal to the relation that exists between husbands and wives to illustrate the union between Christ and the church, but it does not prove that the relations are the same. They appeal also to the relation that exists between a vine and its branches, (John xv.) but this does not prove that the relations are the same. So when the Scriptures appeal to the paternal relation to illustrate the divine paternity, it does not prove that the relations are the same.

"Do you still inquire what I mean by the statement that God is, *in a true and proper sense*, the Father of all? I mean by it, that the term Father, as applied to the Supreme Being, is not a mere unmeaning word. I mean by it, that he feels for all His offspring a mightier and holier love than you feel for yours; and that all his plans are in perfect harmony with the spirit of universal paternity."

Here you make the divine paternity to consist not of a relation, not in the circumstance that God created man in his own image, as you have heretofore argued, but in the simple fact that God "feels for all his offspring a mightier and holier love than I profess for my offspring." This, sir, overturns your whole argument, and proves that God is no more the Father of all men than he is the Father of all beasts and birds. Though one Christian is of more value than many sparrows, yet not one sparrow shall fall to the ground

without his notice, (Matt. x. 29.) God does regard sparrows and regarding them, 'no one will dare to deny that this regard is a "mightier and holier love" than I profess for my offspring. And I do not believe that you will deny that his plan extends to sparrows, and of this you say "all His plans are in perfect harmony with the spirit of his universal paternity." Now, as you make the divine paternity to consist in God's "mightier and holier love for His offspring" than I have for mine, and as you cannot deny that God has all this towards all his living irrational creatures, you are guilty of the very thing you charge upon me, viz: of reasoning upon principles which are applicable to birds and beasts. This materially affects you, as you have denied that God is the father of these; but it would not have affected me had I done it, for I believe in God's universal paternity, that is, that He is the Father of beasts and birds and insects, and of all that hath breath, though I make that belief no part of my controversy. Now, I ask you and our readers to pause, and inquire if plain, simple truth needs such confusion and contradictions to keep itself in its own straight path?

Again, as you make the divine paternity to consist not in a relation, but in feeling, or a mighty and holy love for man, your whole argument about learning this paternity from what we know of parental feeling among men must fall, for the passion of love is not confined to the relation of parents and children, but often kindles and burns in the heart towards others, than an offspring, with as pure and intense a flame as it ever burned in a father's heart. As you make the divine paternity consist in this love, the love that unites hearts that were once strangers is just as good an illustration of the divine paternity as the love of a father.

Your great flourish about "the design, plan and purpose of God" to reconcile all to himself comes far short of meeting my reply to your argument on this subject. My position is very simple and should be met directly. The substance of

what I said is this, salvation is conditional, and that which is conditional may fail; that though the "design, plan and purpose" are sufficiently comprehensive to save all, yet none will be saved only such as comply with the conditions. There are but two ways in which you can fairly defend your argument against this objection to it. First, you can deny that salvation is conditional. If you will do this directly and plainly, we will join issue upon it; in which case, I will attempt to sustain my position by argument. Secondly, you may admit the conditionality of salvation, and attempt to prove that all men will comply with the conditions, in which case your argument will not be founded upon the fact that God proposes the salvation of all men, but upon the supposed fact that all men will comply with the conditions upon which he proposes their salvation. The conditionality of salvation is the point on which this argument must turn, and until you meet this point, all your talk about "the plan, the design and purpose of God," and "the adaptation and efficacy of the means" must amount to just nothing, nor shall I suffer you or our readers to lose sight of this point amid an array of words about plans, purposes, designs and means. If salvation be conditional, then "the plan, design, and purpose," may fail of his final and entire success by a non-compliance with the conditions, and no means can be employed which can be efficient, only in case of a compliance with the condition which moral agents may refuse. I admit that Christ died for all men, that the atonement is in itself sufficient to save all, and that God is willing to save all, if they will comply with the terms of salvation, but I maintain that the only reason why sinners are not now saved, is because they do not comply with the conditions of salvation and for the same reason they may never be saved. This leaves no room for controversy between us on this subject until you define your position, by denying that salvation is conditional, or by admitting it and attempting to prove that all will comply with the conditions.

Yours truly,

LUTHER LEE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

DEAR SIR:—You have assumed that what is now consistent with the divine paternity, may always be consistent with it. When I denied this assumption, and desired you to distinguish between temporary evil, and evil as a final result, you declared that no such distinction exists, excepting in my imagination. When I commented on several scriptural proofs of universal reconciliation, you rested your objections on the fact, that all are not reconciled now—all are not now the children of God in spirit and character. And in this way you have attempted to meet every leading argument of mine to which you have given any attention.

In letter V, I pointed out and illustrated the marked distinction which you denied; and I endeavored to show, that though temporary evil is, evil as a final result would not be, consistent with the perfections of God as the universal Father. Notwithstanding all this, your letter, numbered VI, *does not contain a single sentence in relation to that topic!*

Our readers will judge whether I have misrepresented you, in any respect; and I merely subjoin, that there are three reasons why I object to your substitution of the term Creator for that of Father: 1. You admitted my first position, namely, that "God is the Father of the whole human family;" and the position being once admitted, you were not at liberty to change the terms. 2. The simple terms Creator and Father (and as simple terms we use them) are not synonymous, as I have shown; and the interchangeable use of them tends only to confusion or evasion. 3. The term Father, expresses a relation which, as you affirm, furnishes no sort of support to the affirmative of the question in discussion. Why, then, should

you so strenuously oppose the adoption of that term, or so cautiously use it in reply to my inferences?

In your explication of what you mean by "God's not being the Father of all in a gospel sense," you quote several passages of Scripture which speak of being begotten and born of God, and the like. I answer as follows:

The disciples at Corinth were begotten by the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 15; and so also was Onesimus, as noted in Philemon ii. 10. These were Paul's children, and he was their father, in a figurative sense. They were begotten by him; and being born again, they were new creatures. Divested of the figure of speech, the meaning is, simply, that they were his proselytes. Paul had been the means of their conversion from Judaism or Heathenism to Christianity.

If it be in this sense you speak, when you say that God is the father of some of mankind in a sense in which He is not the Father of them all—if you mean, merely that some of the human family are begotten of God in the same figurative sense that Onesimus was begotten of Paul, I admit it. But of what possible service can this admission be to your argument? The simple meaning is, that God has begotten some of *His own offspring*—that is, some of His children have been brought to a knowledge of the truth, and obedience. In precisely the same sense you are, or may become, the father of your own children.

Peter and his associates were "born again" when they became the proselytes of Jesus—for this was the familiar use of that phrase in and preceding the times of the Messiah. They were begotten into a living hope by his preaching. They trusted that he would redeem Israel; but when he was crucified, that hope perished. Nevertheless, they were begotten again by his resurrection from the dead.

The resurrection was the seal of our Saviour's divine mission. It revived and confirmed the faith of his disciples. They were delivered from the bondage engendered by the

fear of death, Heb. ii. 14—for life and immortality were brought to light,—2 Tim. i. 10. They did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, (as under the law,) but they received the spirit of adoption, (the latter being contrasted with the former, Rom. viii. 15.) and entered into rest.

To the Israelites pertained the adoption of the first covenant,—Rom. ix. 4; and the special blessings they enjoyed, while the Gentiles were aliens and strangers, were by the Apostle considered a sufficient reply to the question, "What advantage, then, hath the Jew?" To believers pertains the adoption of the second covenant; and the special blessings of faith and hope in a glorious immortality, sufficiently display the advantage of those who now believe, without supposing that any of the offspring of God will finally be excluded from the *reality*.

Your review of my second position requires very little to be said in the way of comment.

1. The Scriptures treat of God as a Rock, a Fortress, a Fountain of Living Waters, and the like, as *illustrations*,—but when they treat of Him as the Father of all, the case is widely different. Here is not an image, but a reality; and the illustration of that reality must be sought in the corresponding relation among men.

2. The vine and branches, and marriage, are illustrations which may be classed with what you term the Gospel sense of Father—but they are widely different from the relation for which I contend. A branch may be severed from the vine; husbands and wives may be divorced; he who is begotten of God may need to be begotten again—but the original relation of Father and offspring can never be dissolved, nor can its obligations ever be annulled.

3. I grant that the blind man can know much of the covenant without knowledge of the rainbow as its symbol; and I grant, also, that we might know much of God, (say, for example, as Lawgiver, King, or Judge,) without any knowledge

of an earthly parent as a fitting illustration of divine paternity. But this is not the point. What word besides Father, or its equivalent, and what illustration besides that of an earthly parent, could give us any knowledge of God as a *Father*?

4. I protest against your assumption, that I "make the divine paternity to consist, not in a relation, but in a feeling, a mighty and holy love for man." I have uttered no language which can rightly be so construed. I also protest against your inference, that I include sparrows, and the like, in the plans of the divine paternity. Yet you pursue these false premises until the idea that "God is the Father of beasts and birds and insects," is fairly adopted into the family of your opinions. You do not pretend that they were created in the divine image, (for this would bring them into the same category with mankind;) neither do you quote any authority for the abstract statement. I have more difficulty in apprehending what you meant by it, than in conceiving the object of its introduction into your letter.

You speak of the Scriptural argument in my last epistle, as "a great flourish about the design, plan, and purpose of God;" and you attempt to justify total neglect of my reasoning, by denominating it "an array of words." This is certainly an expeditious mode of procedure, but I doubt whether it will be satisfactory to our readers. They will probably compare the latter half of Letter V, with the closing paragraph of Letter VI; and unless I am greatly deceived, your summary disposal of my arguments will contribute little to your controversial renown.

I deny your right to neglect any of my leading positions or proofs, so long as I confine myself to the question at issue. I deny that what you have said about conditionality, as pertaining to the final destiny of man, invalidates any argument I have presented in the course of this discussion. The scriptural citations and reasoning in my last letter pointedly deny any frustration of the purpose of God, to reconcile all things

to Himself; but you decline any reply, simply because I did not state my position in the phraseology to which you are accustomed.

I waive further comment, and will so far accommodate myself to your judgment, as to consider "the point on which (as you say) the argument must turn."

Your theory of conditions is substantially as follows:—Such only as become the children of God in this life, by faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, can ever attain to final holiness and happiness. Either this is a correct statement of your theory, in a few words, or you must admit that the passages you have quoted in opposition to my view of the divine paternity, avail you nothing. Your quotations refer to faith in Jesus Christ, and to being begotten of God, and born again, by the agency of that faith; and you maintain that for those only of whom God becomes the Father in this figurative sense, in the present life, can there be any assurance of a blessed immortality.

This being your theory of conditions, consistency requires you to admit that all infants dying in infancy, and all idiots dying in idiocy, and the myriads of heathen who have died, and yet may die, without hearing of the atonement, are shut out forever from the tender mercies of Almighty God!

Are you prepared to adopt this appalling result? Doubtless you will seek a way to avoid it, in behalf of infants and idiots. You will say, probably, that they are included in the covenant of grace, as exceptions to the rule of conditions. You will claim final holiness and happiness for them, without compliance with any terms, on the score that it is impossible for them to comply.

But this reasoning will furnish an equally valid plea in behalf of the heathen. You will not depart from the atonement as the basis of any possible redemption, nor from faith in that atonement as the means of forming an evangelical character; and since myriads of the heathen never heard of the Re-

deemer, they are as incapable of complying with the specified terms as are infants or idiots. Are they also excepted from your rule of conditions? If they are, the contingency of death in infancy or idiocy, is provided for in the divine purpose; and if three contingencies can be provided for, why not a thousand? If they are not excepted, and if faith in Jesus Christ, in this life, be a pre-requisite to a blessed immortality, (as your argument implies,) salvation for the heathen is impossible, for the simple reason that it is impossible, for them to comply with the terms!

But aside from these considerations: Your theory denies any absolute divine purpose, as respects the ultimate destination of mankind. And in view of this denial, there is not, there cannot be any certainty that a single soul of our race will be finally holy and happy! If you and yours are disposed to admit such fearful chance work in the economy of the All-wise and Almighty, so be it; as for me and mine, we deny that the divine purpose of reconciliation is conditional in such sense as to imply the possibility of failure.

Illustrations are not arguments; nevertheless the following examples may serve to show my meaning.

It was the purpose of God, unfolded by promise to Abraham, that the posterity of that patriarch, through the line of Isaac and Jacob, should possess the land of Canaan, Gen. xvii. 8. This purpose was revealed before Isaac was born—yet, at a time when the birth of the promised heir was exceedingly improbable. It was made in full view of the prediction that 400 years of bondage in a strange land should intervene, Gen. xv. 13; yet the fulfilment of that purpose was as certain when it was first revealed, as it was when the Israelites crossed the Jordan under the guidance of Caleb and Joshua. In what sense was that purpose conditional?

It was the purpose of God that the scepter should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet; until Shiloh appeared, Gen. xlix. 10. Notwithstanding the downthrow-

ings and up-turnings of the nations, and the complicated conflicts and interests of the world, during the lapse of seventeen centuries, the counsel of the Lord stood firm, and the Messiah appeared in the fulness of time. It was no less certain that Shiloh would come, when the prediction was uttered, than it was when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. You will not pretend that his advent was predicted on the simple ground that God *foreknew* it—else the atonement was but an *accidental* thing; but you will base it in the divine purpose. In what proper sense was that purpose conditional?

In these instances (and many others might be mentioned,) you freely admit such a design, plan and purpose on the part of the Supreme Being, as to forbid the idea of final frustration. Through scenes which, to all human apprehension, were fearfully dark and gloomy—through scenes in which the divine purpose frequently *appeared* to be frustrated, so far as man was competent to see—through scenes in which circumstances seemed successfully to war against God,—He brought Israel into Canaan; and through even darker and more complicated scenes, (including the first death of the Jewish nation and seventy years of captivity in Babylon,) He brought forth the Shiloh in the time appointed. There were no conditions expressed in the revelation of either of these purposes; and though adequate means were necessary for the accomplishment of the recited ends, no such conditionality was implied as to admit the possibility of a failure in either case.

When I speak to you of these earthly things, you believe; but when the testimony relates to heavenly things, you doubt and deny!

The foregoing illustrations lead us to the precise ground occupied in my last letter. The divine purpose of universal reconciliation was formed in full view of all obstructions of every kind; and I deny that its fulfilment is in any such sense conditional as to imply even the possibility of failure.

Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," John xii. 32. A condition is here expressed, namely, "if I be lifted up"—but you will not pretend that the fulfilment of that condition was an uncertain event. The condition being fulfilled, the absolute purpose remains, namely, "I will draw all men unto me." It is also written, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him," John. vi. 44.

The fulfilment of this divine purpose does not imply any violence offered to the will of man, no trespass on human agency, no neglect of means: "*I will draw* all men unto me." If you seek an example, you may find it in the case of Saul. "I have appeared unto thee *for this purpose*," saith the Redeemer, "to make of thee a minister and a witness." He who was exceedingly mad against the disciples of the risen Saviour, he who was even *then* on his way to the feast of slaughter, was brought into conformity to the *divine will*, without any violation of *his own*.

Say, if you please, that this was a miraculous interposition, for the accomplishment of a special purpose: nevertheless, it proves that the Redeemer has power to sway the human will, and that too, without trespassing on the moral freedom of man. And if he can consistently exercise such power for the accomplishment of a *special* purpose, why not for the fulfilment of a *universal* purpose? Let it be granted that the power referred to is not ordinarily exercised—still it is a fact that such power exists; and I judge that the purpose of universal reconciliation is not so likely to be defeated by the circumscribed moral agency of man, as it is to be consummated by the unrestricted moral agency of God.

"*Of His own will*," saith James i. 18, "begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of *first-fruits* of His creatures." The word of truth by which they were so begotten, was the revelation "*of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself*, that in

the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him;" Eph. i. 9, 10. Had the Supreme Being grounded this consummation in *man*, it would have been contingent, and might have failed; but He *purposed it in Himself*—and its fulfilment is guarantied by the wisdom and energy of Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," Eph. i. 11.

It was "according to the purpose and grace of God," that Paul was made a minister and witness of this "word of truth." He saw but a partial development of the plans of Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellest in working; yet he saw enough, and believed enough, to justify the exclamation, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out . . . For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever, Amen." Rom. xi. 33, 36.

Fervently responding Amen, I am respectfully yours.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR:—In your letter before me you proceed to examine my theory of conditions by misrepresenting it. You say, "Your theory of conditions is substantially as follows: Such only as become the children of God, in this life, by faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, can ever attain to final holiness and happiness."

. This is an entire misrepresentation of my argument. Though I believe what you attribute to me, yet that belief made no part of my argument. My argument did not rest on any supposed limitation in point of time, during which sinners must comply with the conditions of salvation, but on the simple fact of conditionality without saying whether the conditions relate exclusively to this life, or whether they extend into the future world. So, the Scriptures which I quoted on the point were adduced to prove the simple fact that salvation is conditional, and not to prove that the conditions are limited to this life. I trust I understand the rules of controversy too well to have argued, under the circumstances, as you say I did. The question whether the conditions of salvation are confined to this life, or whether they may be complied with in the future world, would be out of place, before the question be settled whether salvation be conditional or not. If you deny the conditionality of salvation, it will be my place to prove that it is conditional, rather than prove that the conditions can be complied with only in this world; but when you shall admit the conditionality of salvation, and attempt to prove that sinners will comply with the conditions after death, then it will be in place for me to show that this life furnishes the only opportunity of

complying with the conditions of salvation, and then I will make the attempt.

The above view shows that by representing my argument as being based upon the supposition that the conditions are limited to this life, you misrepresent my argument, instead of meeting it. My argument relates to the fact of conditions and not to the time of complying with the conditions. As you appear to have misunderstood my "theory of conditions," as stated in my last, I will here repeat the point. I said, "Salvation is conditional, and that which is conditional may fail; though the "design, plan and purpose" are sufficiently comprehensive to save all, yet none will be saved only such as comply with the conditions. There are but two ways in which you can defend your argument against this objection to it. First, you may deny that salvation is conditional. If you will do this plainly, we will join issue upon it, in which case I will sustain my position with argument.—Secondly, you may admit the conditionality of salvation, and attempt to prove that all men will comply with the conditions; in which case your argument will not be founded upon the fact that God proposes the salvation of all men, but upon the supposed fact that all men will comply with the conditions upon which he proposes their salvation. The conditionality of salvation is the point on which this argument must turn."

It will be seen that not a word is here said about complying with conditions in this life, or in the next, in contradistinction from each other, and yet, instead of meeting the simple fact of conditionality, you give a false view of my argument by so stating it as to make it depend upon a point which was not even alluded to in it. I call on you again to meet the point; is salvation conditional or not? Give me a yes, or no, that I and our readers may know where to look for you on this question. I can not suffer you to evade it;—he who honestly seeks truth has nothing to conceal. Why should you give an evasive answer? You say, "The divine purpose of universal

reconciliation was formed in full view of all the obstructions of every kind; and I deny that its fulfilment is in any such sense conditional as to imply even the possibility of a failure." I do not know whether you mean to deny the conditionality of salvation or not. You deny that it is conditional "in any such sense," &c., by which it would seem that you admit that it is conditional in some sense, but what that sense is you have not told me. If I proceed to prove that salvation is conditional, on the ground that you deny it, you can say, "I did not deny it absolutely, but only in a certain sense;" and if I proceed to prove that all men do not and never will comply with the conditions of salvation, on the ground that you admit that salvation is conditional, you can reply, I have not yet admitted that salvation is conditional only in a very qualified sense." How convenient it is to leave important points so indefinite as to be able to turn either way! If you believe salvation to be conditional, say so; if you believe it not to be conditional, say so plainly; and if you believe it to be conditional, and yet not in the sense in which I believe it to be conditional, say so, and explain in what sense you believe it to be conditional, that we may understand each other. This perpetual evasion, this studied indefiniteness may help the cause of error, but can never subserve the cause of truth and honest investigation.

Of what you consider my theory of conditions you say, "Your theory denies any absolute divine purpose,, as respects the ultimate destination of mankind. And in view of this denial, there is not, there cannot be, any certainty that a single soul of our race will be finally holy and happy.

This is untrue in two respects.

1. It is not true that my theory denies any absolute divine purpose, as respects the ultimate destination of mankind, for my theory is, that it is God's unchangeable purpose to save all such as do not, and this purpose I look upon as coexistent with the plan of the world's redemption.

2. It is not true that in view of my theory "there is not, and cannot be, any certainty that a single soul of our race will be finally holy and happy." There is a vast difference between certainty and necessity; though I maintain that salvation is conditional, and in this sense depends upon man's moral agency, yet I hold that God's all-surveying sight saw from the beginning who would comply with the conditions and who would not, and what God saw man would do in the free exercise of his moral agency, is just as certain with his perfect wisdom as though he had fixed it so by an irresistible fate, though it now comes to pass freely under his present arrangement, and not of necessity as it then would have done; there is therefore a certainty of the salvation of some of the souls of our race, and this certainty is not confined to the divine mind, for he has revealed it to us, that a great company which no man can number, from among all nations, tongues, kindreds and people, shall stand before his throne, having their robes washed and made white in the blood of the lamb. You say again.

"This being your theory of conditions, consistency requires you to admit that all infants dying in infancy, and all idiots dying in idiocy, and the myriads of heathen who have died, and yet may die, without hearing of the atonement, are shut out forever from the tender mercies of Almighty God!"

I am entirely incapable of seeing how such consequences follow from my theory, and unfortunately your argument, you have only asserted it, without attempting to prove. My argument has nothing to do with infants, idiots, and heathen, but relates exclusively to adults to whom the Gospel is preached, and who, on hearing it, believe or reject it. In all that I have said on the subject of conditions, I have had reference to this class, and this only; nor have I made a single remark which necessarily involves the cause of infants and idiots. If I have, please tell what that remark is. When I

say that God offers salvation in the Gospel, conditionally, it is implied that the remark includes only such as hear the Gospel, but heathen, idiots and infants do not hear the Gospel and therefore, they cannot be included in the remark. If faith in Christ be required of such as hear, and are capable of understanding the Gospel, in order to salvation, and this you will not—dare not deny—will you therefore undertake to prove that infants and idiots, who cannot exercise faith, so far as we can see, must be damned without it; and that heathen who never heard of Christ, must be saved through faith in his name, or be damned for not believing in him, of whom they never heard? And yet you have got to prove these strange positions, before your charge against my theory of conditionality will be valid; that it must damn all infants, idiots and heathen. I am not disposed to go into an exposition of my views concerning infants, idiots and heathen, for it is not essential to the argument. I admit that all infants and idiots will be saved, but this does not prove that the Gospel offers salvation unconditionally to adults; and could you prove that all the heathen will be saved, it would not follow that all adult sinners will be saved, who hear the Gospel and reject it, of whom it is said, "he that believeth not shall be damned."

It is true I did not, in stating my argument, say the salvation of adults who hear the Gospel is conditional, for I supposed you understood the theology of the day too well to suppose for one moment that I had the least reference to infants, idiots and heathen, but it appears I presumed too much upon your intelligence or upon your knowledge of the things you oppose. I now say for your information, that when I argue from the conditionality of salvation, I have reference only to such adult persons as have opportunity to hear and as are capable of obeying the Gospel, and hence you must prove that nothing can be required of these which is not therefore necessarily required of infants, before you can infer that my theory of conditions excludes all infants from salvation.

There is one point more in your letter worthy of notice. It is the effort you make to prove that God's purpose of universal reconciliation of which you speak is unconditional, or certain of being accomplished. But how do you attempt this? not indeed directly by bringing arguments on the point itself, but by laboring to show that certain other purposes of God were unconditional or certain. You refer to the purpose of God to give the land of Canaan to the seed of Abraham; to the prediction that the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh appeared; that it was the purpose of God that Christ should come, &c., &c. To all this I reply,

1. It does not prove that those parts of these predictions which required the co-operation of human agency, were not conditional, notwithstanding they were predicted and those predictions fulfilled. Some things were foretold as positively as any of these events, and yet never took place. It was declared by the prophet Jonah, that in forty days Ninevah should be overthrown, yet Ninevah was not overthrown in forty days. Again, God has most clearly promised the Israelites, whom he brought out of Egypt, that he would bring them into the land of Canaan; yet, when they provoked him in the wilderness, he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest, and they perished in the wilderness. But what does all this prove, that God was mistaken? No; it only proves to my mind, that though no condition was expressed in these cases, yet a condition was implied or understood, and that Ninevah repented and was spared contrary to the prediction or threatening of God; and that the Israelites sinned and perished, contrary to the prediction or promise of God. This principle of the divine administration is explained in Jer. viii. 7-9, which please consult.

2. Were it admitted that all the cases to which you refer furnish so many cases of a divine and unconditional purpose, yea, an absolute and irresistible decree, it would not prove that God has formed an unconditional purpose to save all

men. That God may have unconditionally proposed some things, and absolutely decreed others, I have no objection to admit; but that he has absolutely and unconditionally decreed the salvation of all men, I deny; yea, among the things which he has unalterably decreed, in my view, is that the righteous shall be saved and the wicked damned.

With these remarks I will close, after expressing a hope that in your next you will bring forward some new arguments for the entertainment of our readers.

Yours for the truth,

LUTHER LEE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

DEAR SIR:—In your review of my remarks on your theory of conditions, you intimate that I am ignorant of the prevailing theology, in relation to the heathen; yet you admit that I have correctly stated your theory of conditions, namely, that “such only as become the children of God, in this life, by faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, can ever attain to final holiness and happiness.” You say, “I believe what you attribute to me.” Such being your theory you must admit the appalling result, that all the heathen are swept from the page of redemption, as with the bosom of destruction!

You do not, in any form, deny this result; and unless you do deny it, I shall assume that you adopt it. Vainly you seek to evade it, declaring that you have said nothing about the fulfilment of conditions in this life. This is merely a declaration, in effect, that the legitimate results of your theory constitute no part of your argument! Equally vain is your effort to cover up the cited difficulty, by declaring that you did not design your reasoning to apply to the heathen, but only to such as hear of the Redeemer. Doubtless you did not expect your reasoning to assume such “a questionable shape”—but the theory, as acknowledged by you, is all comprehensive in its terms; and I have a right to insist that you shall either abandon the premises, or adopt all just inferences therefrom. You admit that you believe what I attribute to you, namely, in my statement of your theory of conditions; and will you, dare you deny the legitimacy of the deduction; that not a soul of the heathen millions will ever attain to final holiness and happiness?

Passing from the gloomy prospects of the heathen, I find that you admit the salvation of all infants and idiots, unconditionally. They incur no hazard whatever. The purpose of God, in relation to them at least, will certainly be accomplished. According to your theory, it is a woful evil to possess reason, or to reach the maturity of life! Idiots and infants are perfectly safe; while those who possess reason and live to maturity, incur infinite perils, without countervailing advantage! The former will certainly be saved: the latter must run the gauntlet of endless life or death! In this view of the divine economy, can either reason or maturity of life be considered a blessing?

I know not why you should object to my statement, nor to the inference from it, that "your theory denies any absolute purpose of God as respects the ultimate destination of mankind"—for you flatly deny that God has unconditionally and absolutely purposed the final holiness and happiness of any of our race, excepting infants and idiots. All that you say about His unchangable purpose, and His absolute and unconditional decree to do certain things on certain conditions, does not meet my statement—for you deny the certainty that any one will comply with the conditions. All may possibly be saved; and it is possible that not even one soul will be saved.

In seeking to avoid this difficulty, you involve yourself in one that is worse. You say that the ultimate destiny of every man is just as certain as though it was fixed by *irresistible fate*. Your distinction between *necessity* and *certainty*, is a distinction without a difference, so far as either the final result or the impeachment of the divine character is concerned. In your view, God instituted such a system of things as *He perfectly knew*, would issue in the endless woe of millions of our race! You will not say that He acted from *necessity*, but *voluntarily*; and since *the known result* of a deliberate and voluntary

act determines the nature of the motive, how can you absolve Him from the charge of having purposed that result?

Moreover: According to your theory, the gospel proposes conditions of salvation, with which, as *God knew with perfect certainty*, vast multitudes of mankind would never comply!

After stating that "God's all-surveying sight saw from the beginning who would comply with the terms, and who would not," you add, "there is therefore a certainty of the salvation of some of the souls of our race." But there is no connection between your premises and your conclusion. For aught you can know to the contrary, He saw from the beginning that not a single soul could comply with the terms. Uncertain certainty and unerring-chance-work are among the paradoxes of your theory.

You however quote from Revelations vii. namely, that a great company whom no man can number, were seen standing before the throne. But infants and idiots alone would constitute an innumerable company; and they (as you admit; though you furnish no proof,) will be saved, unconditionally and absolutely. Your quotation comes short of the certainty you wish to establish. Had you quoted Rev. v. 13, you would have furnished testimony to the point: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Dr. Geo. Campbell declares that the terms here employed "include the whole rational creation." Diss. vi.; and Prof. Stewart after making a like acknowledgment, subjoins, "If this be not spiritual worship, I am unable to produce a case where worship can be called spiritual and divine." Letters to Channing. The whole rational creation shall ultimately unite in that thrilling eulogium; and whether this sublime result be or be not effected by an absolute purpose of the Lord, it is plain

that the divine purpose for which I contend is not conditional in any such sense as to imply the possibility of a failure.

I used the latter expression in my preceding letter, and twice repeated it, in connection with two Bible illustrations, not doubting that you would clearly understand my meaning. But you charge me with striving to evade "the point on which (as you say) the argument must turn." It hence "appears that I presumed too much on your intelligence, or on your knowledge of the things you oppose. I now say, for your information," that the final holiness and happiness of all mankind implies that they will all be brought to a knowledge of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ, and heartily join in the spiritual worship of the heavenly world; that this implication does not exclude those who die in infancy or idiocy, but applies universally; that the final divine purpose for which I contend is not conditional, but absolute; and that it will be consummated in the immortal resurrection state, not by man, as the agent of his own salvation, but by the agency of God and the Lamb, and the means of their appointment.

In your review of my illustrations of an absolute purpose of God, you refer to the Ninevites, who repented because of the preaching of Jonah, and were not destroyed, and to the Israelites, who rebelled and perished in the wilderness. Both these cases are of the conditional class mentioned in Jer. xviii., to which you allude; but they are not of the class noted in Isa. xiv. 24-27, xlv. 10, 11, as you may see by comparison. Nor are they of the same class as either of the examples of absolute purpose commented on in my last letter.

God did not promise to Abraham that this or that particular generation of his descendents should possess the land of Canaan, but simply that his posterity should possess it, after four hundred years of bondage in a strange land. Most of those who came out of Egypt perished in the wilderness because of their rebellion. Even Moses and Aaron sinned against God and were not permitted to enter the promised

land. Numbers xx. 24, Deut. xxxii. 49, 50. But what had this to do, either with their final destiny, or with the fulfilment of the absolute promise of God to Abraham?

Moreover, though that purpose was absolute, it was not the final purpose of God. It was but a part of the plan to bring forth Shiloh of Judah in the time appointed. It was the absolute purpose of the Almighty that the Messiah should appear;—and a brief space after he appeared, he was “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” into the hands of wicked men; and these were shortly gathered together, to do whatsoever the Lord’s counsel determined before to be done. Acts ii. 23, iv. 28. You will not pretend that these events were in any such sense conditional, as to imply the possibility of failure—for the Messiah was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. You will not pretend that the atonement was merely an accident, a thing which happened to occur, and which might not have happened—but you will base it in an absolute, unconditional, divine purpose, which could not fail of accomplishment.

But even the determinate counsel referred to, was not the final purpose of God. There was another promise made to Abraham, namely, “In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations, kindreds, and families of the earth be blessed.” Gen. xxii. 18, xxviii. 14, Acts iii. 25. That seed was Christ, and that promise the Gospel. Gal. iii. 8, 16. The hope set before us is the hope of the Gospel preached to Abraham; and that hope (compared to an anchor, both sure and steadfast) entereth into that *within the veil*, whither the forerunner is for us entered. Heb. vi. 18, 19. The promise (which is denominated the Gospel) therefore looks forward to the future life as the scene of its consummation. A glorious immortality is a chief doctrine, yea, it is the crowning excellency of the “glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” Life and immortality were brought to light through the Gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10, namely, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead; and the pro-

mise of universal blessedness in him will be fulfilled in the immortal resurrection state. I say *universal*—for every individual in our race belongs to some nation, family, or kindred; and the promise is, that all the nations, families and kindreds of the earth shall be blessed in Christ.

We have seen that the first named promise to Abraham was unconditional and absolute: what valid reason can there be for denying a like unconditional and absolute character to the second? The former was a means; the latter is the final purpose of the Lord. Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform." Rom. iv. 20, 21. The faith of the "Father of the faithful" covered the ground of both promises, whereas, with us, the fulfilment of one of them is a matter of history. Shall we become drunken with the spirit of unbelief, and stagger at the remaining promise of God?

You may say, however, that if we admit the absolute character of the promise referred to, faith, will be null and void. I answer, by no means. That promise, being the gospel, is the thing to be believed, and no man can justly be required to believe any thing but the truth. All the exhortations to believe the gospel, and all the joys of faith in, and all miseries of disbelief or misbelief of, that gospel, presuppose the unconditional and absolute truth of the promise made to Abraham. There is a special salvation enjoyed by faith and hope. He who believes in the resurrection from the dead, is delivered from the bondage engendered by the fear of death, and enters into rest. He is saved by anticipation; and fleeing to the gospel hope, he enjoys a strong consolation. But neither infants, nor idiots, nor the heathen who have not heard of a Redeemer, nor those, who, having heard, believe not in the truth of his gospel, have any part in the special salvation by faith and hope. Nevertheless, they are all embraced in the

reality, namely, the consummation of the gospel in the immortal resurrection state.

In the Scriptures believers are set forth as being the first fruits of universal humanity, and as possessing the first fruits of the spirit. James i. 18, Rom. viii. 23: 'They are distinguished as first fruits merely, although they constituted a part of the harvest—the difference being that the whole harvest was not yet gathered in.' So in 1 John ii. 2: 'He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,' even the "whole world" lying in wickedness. 1 John v. 19. Again: "It pleased the Father..... by him to reconcile all things to himself"—yet of the "all things" here noted, some had already been reconciled by faith. Col. i. 19–21. So also in Romans viii. the believers who were adopted by faith in Jesus Christ are distinguished from the whole creation, although they constituted a part thereof.

But those who received the spirit of adoption by faith, did not restrict immortal blessedness to such as were the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. On the contrary, they rejoiced in the prospect of the universal harvest, and looked in faith and hope for the redemption and consequent adoption of the whole rational creation.

In Romans viii. Paul says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (the believers.) For the earnest expectation of the creature (more properly the creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the *creature itself* *also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption in the glorious liberty of THE CHILDREN OF GOD.* For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only *they*, but *ourselves* *also* which have the first fruits of the

spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to-wit, the redemption of our body."

You will observe the emphatic *also*. Not believers only, but the creation itself *also* shall be delivered. Not the creation only; but *also* those who had been adopted by faith, groaned and waited for a more glorious adoption than any which can possibly be attained in the present life. The deliverance declared is the redemption of our body, the whole groaning creation, and the consequent universal adoption into the spiritual family on high. The liberty of which the apostle testifies is not merely an exemption from the evils of this imperfect state, but it is "the glorious liberty of the children of God;" and all condemnation in unbelief, and all judgements for sin, must relate to periods *preceding* that glorious final result.

Desiring you to give attention to the foregoing arguments, presented in previous letters, I am yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR:—I will pay some attention to what you call your Scriptural argument. In doing this, I shall first notice what you have said in reply to my last, and then examine your proofs, and conclude with additional evidence, if space permit. You say,

“In your review of my remarks on your theory of conditions, you intimate that I am ignorant of the prevailing theology in relation to the heathen; yet you admit that I have correctly stated your theory of conditions, namely, that *“such ONLY as become the children of God in this life, by faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, can ever attain to final holiness and happiness.”* You say, “I believe what you attribute to me. Such being your theory, you must admit the appalling result, that all the heathen are swept from the page of redemption, as with the bosom of destruction.”

My dear sir, had you read the whole of my argument, you would have seen that my belief of what you attributed to me, as acknowledged, was limited to adults who hear the gospel and believe or reject it; you would have seen that I said in the same connection, “My argument has nothing to do with infants, idiots and heathen, but relates exclusively to adults to whom the gospel is preached.” You must have known from this, that when I said I believed what you attributed to me, I could not have meant to include the necessity of a change by faith in the atonement, only of adults who hear the gospel. You knew you attributed to me what I denied, and you make your defence rest upon the supposition that I believe the very thing that I denied believing. Surely a man must be very

much in want of a place to stand upon, to plant his feet upon such a foundation. But the truth is, when I said I believed what you attributed to me, I was treating of the time of becoming the children of God and not of the manner, as by faith or without faith. You said my theory was that "such only as became the children of God in this life," &c. I denied having advanced any such opinion or argument, limiting the time of becoming the children of God to this life. I admitted that I believed it, that is, I believed that none could be saved in the future world, who did not become the children of God in this. All this I do believe: I believe that infants and idiots and heathen must be renewed by the Holy Ghost in this world, to be saved in the next. Now, that this admission was an admission of the necessity of such a change, and not an admission of the necessity of its being by faith, so far as infants are concerned, you must have known from the fact that I absolutely denied that faith was required of infants, idiots and heathen, who never had an opportunity of hearing the gospel.

But you say, "I have a right to insist that you shall either abandon the premises or adopt all just conclusions therefrom," that is, adopt the conclusion that all infants, idiots and heathen will be lost. No sir, I shall adopt no such conclusion. and the premises I cannot abandon, for I never occupied them. By the premises I understand you to mean that infants, idiots and heathen must become the children of God by faith, in this world, to be saved in the next. Now though I think I cannot abandon these premises in fact, having never occupied them, intentionally at least, yet as you require me to abandon and abjure them, declaring that I never did believe the position, and that if I have at any time, and especially in this discussion, said any thing which is even liable to be so construed as to imply such a belief I regret having said so, and do hereby retract it;—and further, all those who may have so understood me, if any have, I hereby assure them that they

have understood me contrary to my intention, and that all who may have represented me as so believing, are assured that they have misrepresented me, and are requested to correct themselves according to the above explanation. You see then that my "theory of conditions" is just what you stated it to be as I acknowledged, only it does not extend to infants, idiots and heathen, so far as the conditions are concerned, as I distinctly stated in my last; for them I have another theory.

After inferring the damnation of all the heathen from my theory, you say, "You do not, in any form, deny the result; and unless you do deny it, I shall assume that you adopt it." In reply to this strange position I remark,

1. It settles, so far as you are concerned, a rule of controversy, and gives me the right to assume that you adopt every principle which you do not deny, for if you have the right of such an assumption, I must have the same right. I have no objection to this, as I have nothing to conceal, and shall find it very convenient to bring you up, whenever you attempt to evade or occupy a non-committal position.

2. I do deny the necessary damnation of the heathen. That a great portion of the heathen will be lost I have no doubt, that some of them will be saved is in my view probable. If a heathen love God, and do his will, so far as he has the means of knowing what that will is, he will be saved, but if not he will be damned. Rom. i. 20:—"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15, "For as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean-

while accusing, or else excusing one another." The conclusion, in my view is, that the heathen have light enough to damn them, if abused, and, of course light enough to save them, if improved.

In speaking of infants being saved unconditionally you say, "They incur no hazard whatever." And what of that! Is such a belief false in theory or dishonorable to God? But while they incur no hazard, it is also true that they can reap none of the advantages of a well spent life.

But you say again, "According to your theory, it is a woful evil to possess reason, or reach the maturity of life. Not quite so fast. My theory teaches no such thing. It teaches that "to possess reason and to reach the maturity of life," may be the means of acquiring an endless degree of happiness to which infants and idiots will never attain, though saved. It is not a woful evil to possess reason and reach the maturity of life, but it is a woful evil to abuse reason and misimprove the maturity of life. When you learn to discriminate between the possession of an advantage and the neglect and abuse of an advantage, you will see the fallacy of your reasoning.

To call the condition of rational being held responsible to obey the divine law, and accountable for disobedience, being compelled "to run the gauntlet of endless life or death," as you do, is beneath the dignity of the subject. "Nay, but O man! who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou formed me thus?" Rom. ix. 20.

You ask, "In this view of the divine economy, can either reason or maturity of life be considered a blessing? I answer, yes. Rom. viii. 28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, (not for them that hate him,) to them that are the called according to his purpose." If there is evil it is the result of the mis-improvement and abuse of reason and life. Those sinners who reject the gospel in this life, you must admit are responsible above those

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who are not favored with the gospel, and must, of course, suffer more punishment somewhere at some time. "In this view of the divine economy can" an offer of the gospel, "be considered a blessing?"

You say, "I know not why you should object to my statement, nor to the inference drawn from it, that your theory denies any absolute purpose of God," &c. My reason is, sir: this: your statement and your inference are both false, and this is reason enough. You still insist that according to my theory of conditions, "it is possible that not even one soul will be saved." I fully met this supposed difficulty in my last, and you have not met my reason, but, as you are wont to do, repeated your statement.

1. Your statement is not now true, for many are already saved of which we have the most conclusive evidence.

2. If it be "possible that one soul will not be saved" for time to come, yet it is certain that many will be saved, for God, who knows the end from the beginning, has so informed us in his blessed word. "This proves that there is a difference between certainty and necessity, a point which you deny, not much to the credit of your power of discrimination.

But you bring the wonderful objection against me that my theory teaches that "God instituted such a system as He perfectly knew, would issue in the endless wo of millions of our race." And what of all this? I frankly admit it. I have no notion of a blind or ignorant God; I believe God knew perfectly well before he made man just who would be saved and who would be lost. But He knew at the same time at least two other things.

1. He knew that all might be saved, and that those who should be lost would alone be responsible for their own misery; that they would bring it upon themselves by their own wrong doings.

2. He knew at the same time that a greater amount of good

than evil, of happiness than misery, would be the result of the system.

You say, "For aught you can know to the contrary, He saw from the beginning that not a single soul would comply with the terms." I retort it. On the same principle for aught you can know to the contrary, He did not see that all would be saved, or He did see that some would be lost. If God cannot have revealed it in the Bible that some will be saved and some lost, then he cannot have revealed it that all will be saved and which of these points he has revealed is the real point under discussion. Your statement is as clear a denial that God could foreknow from the beginning what events would take place as could be framed out of words. On what then does your hope of universal salvation rest? If God knew he may have revealed it in the Bible, and I may know.

You quote the promise of God to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. On this I remark,

1. It is perfectly easy to conceive that all nations, all the families of the earth, and all the kindreds of the earth, can be blessed with the gospel of Christ without supposing every individual of all nations will be saved. We as a nation are blessed with the gospel, are blessed in the seed of Abraham, but every individual is not saved though the promise to Abraham is now fulfilled in relation to this nation.

2. Whatever the promise to Abraham may comprehend, it is certain that as individuals we become personally interested in the blessing, only on condition of faith. It is said of Abraham, Rom. iv. 11, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe." Gal. iii. 9, 26, 29. "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to

the promise." This shows that none can enjoy the blessing promised to Abraham, only on condition of faith; it is therefore for you to prove, not that the promise is to all, but that all will comply with the condition of the promise by believing in Jesus Christ.

I have suffered myself to be so led by your assertions and queries, which have nothing to do with the main question, that I have not room left to notice your other Scripture quotations, but I have met the one above on which you rely most, and will show in my next that the others have nothing to do with the subject, if you request it.

Yours truly,

LUTHER LEE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

DEAR SIR:—In replying to my review of your theory of conditions, you declare that I did not rightly apprehend your meaning. The simple fact that one-third of your letter is devoted to a disclaimer and accompanying explanations, furnishes at least a presumption that the misapprehension is not wholly chargeable to my account. You evidently write as one who is conscious that he had not been sufficiently explicit in the expression of his opinions.

But your theory, as now modified or explained, is scarcely less objectionable than it was in the mis-apprehended form—for after your labored attempt to show that the case of the heathen is not quite hopeless, you do not doubt that a great portion of them will be lost, and you consider it barely probable that some of them will be saved! And this, too, after assuming “another theory” (or haply “another gospel”) in their behalf—yea, after calling to your aid the renewing power of the Holy Ghost, exercised without regard to the faith or moral agency of man, you succeed in attaining the mere probability that all of the heathen will not go down to the realms of endless death! Is this the sure and steadfast hope of the gospel of the Son of God? or is this a part of the prospect which enables the believer to rejoice with unspeakable joy?

If you will curiously scrutinize your theory, and compare it with certain of your arguments presented in this discussion, you will discover that you must either abandon ever the bare probability referred to, or adopt the doctrine of Universalism.

First of all, I desire you to remember that all the scriptural

citations which you have urged as objections to my reasoning, refer to becoming the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, and to being begotten, and born again, and constituted heirs, by the agency of that faith. All the blessings mentioned or implied in those citations, belong exclusively to such as believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, in those blessings infants, idiots and heathen can have neither part nor lot. In applying the cited passages to the immortal state, you debar yourself the use of them in any attempt to prove the final holiness and happiness of a single individual of those three classes of mankind.

Whither will you turn for the basis of the assumed probability? You say that "infants, idiots and heathen, must be renewed by the Holy Ghost, in this world, to be saved in the next." But this is merely your opinion. And besides: you have not furnished a particle of scriptural proof that any soul of them will be thus renewed!

Your citations from Rom. i. and ii. are not to the point. They say nothing about being renewed by the Holy Ghost, nor of final holiness and happiness. Your remark, "If a heathen love God," is hypothetical at best; and the probability which you seem to regard with so much self-congratulation, is at last resolved into a bare possibility that they may not all be damned!

Moreover: you declare your belief "that none can be saved in the future world who do not become the children of God in this." Here, also, we have your mere opinion. Now be it noted that the scriptures treat of three senses in which mankind are regarded as the children of God: 1st. By creation in His image. 2d. By faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 3d. By the resurrection from the dead—for in the immortal state "they are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection," Luke xx. 36. You deny that the first-named sense gives any assurance of final holiness and happiness. You reject the second as inapplicable to infants, idiots and heathen.

And if you adopt the third as the basis of hope in their behalf, you will at the same time prove Universalism—for all the testimonies concerning the immortal resurrection state are couched in universal terms.

In noticing my inferences from your theory, so far as it applies to death in infancy or idiocy, you intimate that I replied against God. No, sir, I have not replied against God, but merely against your creed. And in what way do you meet my reply? Chiefly by wishing me to distinguish between the possession and the abuse of a blessing. This, however, is only begging the question. Is either reason or maturity of life a blessing, if it involves infinite perils? Which would be preferable, seventy years of idiocy with the certainty of endless bliss? or, seventy years of reason with the hazard of endless woe? It is admitted, of course, that neither infants nor idiots "can reap the advantages of a well-spent life"—but of what moment are those advantages, in contrast with, or even as a part of, an eternity of happiness? Would it be wise either to sell or jeopardize an immortal birth-right for a mess of pottage.

You ask me whether the offer of the gospel is a blessing to those who reject it! You might as well inquire whether the offer of a good medicine is a blessing to a patient by whom it is rejected.

In your notice of the question of certainty, you wrongly charge me with denying God's infinite knowledge, and all your inferences from that supposed denial are therefore null and void. You say, "I have no notion of a blind or ignorant God," and I agree with you. But why did you not consider my position, that the known result of a deliberate and voluntary action determines the nature of the motive? It is your concession of the infinity of divine knowledge which gives force to this plain principle in morals, as applied to the subject in hand. If God perfectly knew there would be final evil in the system of things which He voluntarily instituted, He purposed that final evil.

But you say that God saw there would more good than evil result from His plan—that is, He knew that fewer would be doomed to endless woe than would attain to final holiness and happiness! On this principle, God would have created had He known positively that only one more would be finally saved than lost! You intimate that He was under the necessity of creating with the perfect certainty that somewhat less than half of his offspring would be damned, or of not creating at all! Would you have entered into the marriage relation with a corresponding certainty?

Passing to your review of my argument on the promised universal blessedness in Christ, I find that you have evaded both my positions. 1. I endeavored to prove that the promise looks forward to the immortal resurrection state, as the scene of its consummation—but in the first number of your review you assume that it refers solely to the present life. 2. I endeavored to prove that both promises to Abraham were unconditional and absolute: that the second promise is the Gospel, the thing to be believed; and that no man can justly be required to believe anything but the truth. The terms of the promise are positive: "SHALL BE blessed." No condition is expressed, and I deny that any is implied, excepting such as God and Christ are pledged to fulfil. Yet you restrict the promise to such as believe—and thus you not only shut out infants, idiots and heathen from the blessedness promised in the gospel, but you also seem to imply that the promise is not true until we believe it!

In the New Testament, the promised blessing is noted, not as an effect, but as the cause or *instrument* of regeneration. "Of his own will begat He us *with word of truth*, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures," James i. 18. What that word of truth was, and is, may be learned from Eph. i. 13: "In whom ye also trusted, *after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.*" Observe the expression, "*the gospel of your salvation.*" This was the word of

truth *before* they heard of it; and it was by hearing and believing that which was true independently of their faith, that they were brought to a filial trust in God.

Not merely the trust, but also the labors of the primitive disciples, and the reproaches they suffered, are spoken of in immediate connection with the doctrine for which I contend. "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe." 1. Tim. iv. 10. There is an unequivocal declaration that God is THE SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN; and that the declaration is neither nullified nor modified by the special salvation of those who believe, may be learned by noticing the use of the adverb *especially* in other passages.

Gal. vi. 10: "Do good unto ALL MEN, *especially* unto them who are of the household of faith." Did the apostle mean that the disciples were to do good to such *only* as were of the company of believers? Did he design to absolve them from the duty of *universal love*, by mentioning specially the household of faith?

2. Tim. iv. 13: "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but *especially* the parchments." Did Paul mean that Timothy should bring *only* the parchments?

The apostle does not say that God is the Saviour of such only as believe. He is the Saviour of ALL: and they who believe this truth, enjoy the presence of the *spirit* of truth, the Holy Ghost, the COMFORTER, John xiv. 26, xv. 26. The unbeliever does not and cannot, receive this special salvation, for it is wrought only by faith and hope. Neither can it be received by infants or idiots—nor by any sane adult who hears not of him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Nevertheless, all these are provided for in the economy of heaven. The first member of the apostle's testimony, the unqualified declaration that God is the Saviour of all men covers the whole ground of humanity, without distinction: the

latter clause, the special salvation applies only to believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the spirit of the foregoing testimony, those who were specially saved by faith, maintained that "God our Saviour will have ALL MEN to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for ALL, to be testified in due time." 1. Tim. ii. 4-6. Such is the will, the ultimate purpose, of the "one God and Father of all;" and it will be vain to pretend that His will, so strongly and clearly expressed, will not be consummated—for to the primitive believers He made "known the mystery of His WILL, according to His GOOD PLEASURE, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, He might gather together in one ALL THINGS in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." Eph. i. 9, 10. And hence it is written "Of him, and through Him, and to Him, are ALL THINGS, to whom be glory for ever, Amen." Rom. xi. 36.

It was of His *own will* that He begat the primitive disciples by the agency of the word of truth; and they affirmed that He worketh *all things* after the counsel of His *own will*, James i. 18, Eph. i. 11. And hence they regarded the divine will as a sufficient pledge that all men will ultimately be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

You might as properly deny any agency to the will of God, as to deny that it is a guaranty for the salvation of all. If it be true that some men might be finally damned, though "God will have all men to be saved," then some men might be finally saved, though the Bible should declare that God will have all men to be damned! According to your theory, it would make no sort of difference as to the final result, whether the divine will should be expressed in the latter form or the former.

If you object that though God will have all men to be

saved, all are not *now* saved, I reply, Neither is death yet swallowed up in victory, Isaiah xxv. 8, Cor. xv. 54. Nevertheless, by faith we may rise from the death in sins to the life of righteousness, and fore-taste the joys of the period when both those sayings will be brought to pass, namely, in the immortal resurrection from the dead.

It is this view of the divine will, this consummation of the purpose which God hath purposed in Himself, that justifies us in praying for all men, without wrath or doubting. Assuredly, we are enjoined to pray in faith; and though, in consequence of our ignorance of what is best as means, we may scarcely know what to pray for as we ought, yet the spirit itself rises heaven-ward with yearnings that can not be uttered. The heart which has been renewed by the love of God, most ardently prays and longs for the salvation of all mankind; and nothing short of an assurance that this result will finally be attended, can fill that heart with joy and peace.

Conformably to the intimation in the close of your last letter, I request you, in due form, to notice the arguments then neglected, and also the preceding. And that your review of the argument on Romans viii. may be pertinent, let it be noted that the phrase, "the whole creation," in v. 22, is the same that is rendered "every creature," in Mark xvi. 15 and Rev. v. 13. The joint argument of these three passages, is as follows:

1. The gospel is to be preached to **EVERY** creature, that is, to or for all mankind; and that gospel, as we have seen, is the word of truth, the promise of universal blessedness in Christ.

2. The creature (or as in verse 22, the whole creation, literally **EVERY CREATURE**) shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

3. As shown in my last letter, **EVERY CREATURE**, the whole rational creation, shall ultimately unite in the eulogium, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him who sit-

ing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him who sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb for ever.

In the full assurance of faith in this final result, and confessing my incompetency to conceive an issue more worthy of God and the Messiah, I am respectfully yours.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR: In this communication I shall endeavor to confine my remarks to those points which concern the question under discussion.

I am glad that you feel the force of my views and illustrations of the case of infants, idiots and heathen. But you seem to suppose that my proof is not sufficient to secure their salvation. About this we need have no contention, for it forms no part of the discussion. I did not give my views concerning infants, idiots and heathen, as a part of the discussion, or as points to be proved in the discussion, but as a disclaimer of what you charged me with believing, and as illustrations of points wherein you had misrepresented me. My argument is that adults, who are *compos mentis*, cannot be saved only on certain conditions, with which they may or may not comply. Now I maintain that the scriptures which make this conditional offer of salvation have reference only to such persons as can believe, and have no reference whatever to infants and idiots, who cannot understand the Gospel, and to heathen who never have an opportunity of hearing it. Suppose then that there were no other scriptures which relate to them, as those which limit salvation to such as believe do not relate to them, but only to such as are capable of believing, it would not follow that they must therefore be lost. It is rather a singular position that I should be required, in attempting to prove that all men will not be holy and happy, to prove that infants, idiots and heathen will be holy and happy. I have given my views on this subject, and they may go for what they are worth, and I shall not suffer myself to be so far di-

verted from the question at issue as to attempt a defence of them. It is worthy of remark, however, that I might take your third alternative and rely upon Luke xx. 36, to which you refer, without involving myself in universal salvation, for that happens not to be a universal text. The 5th verse says,

"But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world," &c. This supposes that some will be unworthy to obtain that world of blessedness.

What you say of infants and idiots running no hazard, and of those who possess reason running such hazard, is but little more than a repetition of what you said in your last, and what was met in my last. There is, strictly speaking, no hazard in the case, because the liability of being lost does not depend upon chance, or any want of power or skill on our part, or upon any thing beyond our knowledge or control, but if we are lost it will be the result of our own wicked and wilful rejection of the offers of life. If God had not given us hands, we should not run the hazard of knocking our neighbors down with our fists or of cutting our own fingers; and if God had not given us a mouth and throat, a stomach and brains, we should not have run the hazard of getting drunk. What dreadful hazards God has subjected us to by giving us these things! Yea, if God had not given us tongues we should not have run the hazard of uttering blasphemy. Yet you cannot deny that God has given us these things with the perfect knowledge that some would knock their neighbors down, that some would use one hand to cut their fingers on the other, and that some would get drunk, and that others would blaspheme.

But, sir, in giving us our existence with the constitutions we possess, and under the circumstances of our case, God has, according to your doctrine of hazards, subjected us to the hazard of sin and misery for life, and to the same evils in the future world, for a period, how long you presume not to decide. Now, if such a dreadful hazard as this be consistent with the divine paternity, a greater hazard may be consistent with it.

If God cannot save men from this hazard, consistently with his grand scheme of government, then there are some things which he cannot consistently do, and to save men from the hazard of endless punishment may be one of those things. It must be difficult to see why God could not as easily save men from the hazard of going to hell, as to save them from the hazard of remaining in hell after they are there.

If God can consistently subject man to the hazard of any evil, however small, the foundation of your argument is removed, and a greater evil may be consistent; you must therefore deny the existence of evil, or admit that it may exist forever. If God can subject a man to the hazard of getting drunk, he may subject him to the hazard of endless punishment, unless you can prove that to get drunk is not a real evil, that it will be as much for man's good to get drunk as it is to say his prayers. If God suffers one thing to befall man which is not for his good, your whole argument must go by the board. Will you then deny the existence of evil?

Having thus disposed of your principal queries and quibbles, I will attend to the Scripture proofs you have adduced. And it should be borne in mind that the question is, "Do the Scriptures teach," &c. What Scriptures have you adduced to prove that all men will be finally holy and happy?

John xii. 32. "And if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me."

I do not suppose this text has any reference to the final salvation of every individual in the future world, but to the results which were to follow his death in this world. "This he said signifying what death he should die," (verse 33.) and hence, he describes what should follow that death. The Holy Spirit was poured out and there was a great ingathering of souls to Christ, the Gentiles were called, and Christianity soon swayed the Roman Empire. It was a fulfilment of Gen. xlix. 10,—*"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, &c.,—until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of*

the people be." "The Pharisees said (verse 16) perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold the world has gone after him." Now, "the world" is as comprehensive as "all men," and yet it did not include the Pharisees in this case, and so, when Christ says "I will draw all men unto me," he means no more than that after his death, when he should go and "pray the Father," (John xiv. 16,) and secure the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, there would be a general gathering to his name, and that his religion should prevail. This I suppose to be the true meaning of the text. If you still persist in referring it to the future world, as every individual is not drawn to Christ in this, it will not then prove the final holiness and happiness of all men, for it may refer, in that case, to their being gathered before him to judgment, Matt. xxv. 31—46. Acts xvii. 31. Rom. xix. 10. 2 Cr. 1v c 0.

Eph. 9—11. This whole subject I understand to refer to the call of the Gentiles. The Jews had long been God's only covenanted people, yet it was his purpose finally to bring in the Gentiles and make one Gospel Church out of both Jews and Gentiles. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth," i. e. Jews and Gentiles. This is "the mystery of his will" which he has "made known unto us." Rom. xi. 35, 36, might as well be quoted in proof of any thing else as the doctrine of universal salvation. I know not why you should have called my attention to this text.

Rev. v. 12. I wrote an exposition of this for my last, but omitted it for want of room. You shall now have it.

The text does not refer to the final result, but to events which have taken place, or are yet to take place in this world.

1. It is doubtless a highly figurative text and therefore cannot be relied upon as proof of an important doctrinal point. The expressions "in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, and in the sea," cannot be understood literally:

Where is the place denoted by the expression "under the earth" in contradistinction for "on the earth?" And who sung from the sea? being "in the sea." Was it Leviathan? Was it great whales? Ah! it must not only include these but all the little codlings to admit of a literal exposition. Had not our pilgrim fathers this exposition in mind when they composed the following ever to be remembered verse?

"Ye bubbling monsters of the deep
Your Maker's praises spout;
Up start ye codlings as ye peep
And wag your tails about."

If the expressions on earth, under the earth and in the sea, are used figuratively in the text, it is probable that heaven is also used figuratively. The truth is, these terms are doubtless used to denote different nations and people here, scenes on earth, and the event represented has most probably already taken place.

2. If the text were to be construed literally, it would not and could not refer to the final holiness and happiness of all men. Construe it literally, and it must take place during the present state of things, for men on earth are said to take part in the song. Suppose, then, a time should come when all on earth, and all in heaven should unite in a song of praise to God, it would only prove universal piety on earth at a particular time. It would not prove that there might not come another great apostacy as described long after this. Rev. xx. 7-9. Nor would it prove the salvation of those who may have died and gone to hell during the preceding ages of almost universal corruption. To make the text teach Universalism, it should name the residents of one other important place, as joining in a song of praise to God. Did the text add, "And all that are in hell heard I saying," &c., it might prove something to your purpose. If the apostle designed to teach the doctrine of universal salvation, it must be difficult to see how he came to be guilty of such an important omission.

11. Tim. v. 10. This teaches that God is the Savior of men in two senses.

1. He is the Savior of all men. He is the Savior of all men because he has provided it for all, offers it to all, is able and willing to save all.

2. God is the Savior, "especially of them that believe." That is, the salvation which he has provided for, and offers to all, he bestows upon none only such as believe. It is a little strange that such a text should be quoted to prove the final holiness and happiness of all men. 1 Tim. ii. 4-6. "Who will have all men to be saved," &c. God wills that all men should be saved now, but they are not all saved now. Is God's will done in every thing? If it is not, where is your argument? If it is, why are not all saved now? Is it not God's will that men should be saved in this life? Is it God's will that men should lie, swear, steal, get drunk, and commit murder? If it is not, it must be his will that they should be saved from these things. Then God's willing the salvation of all men does not prove that all will be saved. You quote on this point, Eph. i. 11, "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." No doubt God works all *his works* after the counsel of his own will, and if you will prove that he will work the final holiness and happiness of all men, I will admit that it will be done after the counsel of his own will; but the question is, Does or will God work this? God works his own work after the counsel of his own will, and the sinner works his work after the counsel of his will, or after the counsel of the wicked one. But God does not work the sinner's work nor the Christian's work. Do you believe that God works the work of the drunkard and the murderer in them, or by them? You refer to James i. 18, but this only proves what I admit, that it was of God's will that he first called the Jews to be a kind of first fruit of his creatures, by which I understand the Gentiles.

You say, 'If it be true that some men will be damned

though God will have all men to be saved, then some men might be saved, though the Bible should declare that God will have all men to be damned." If God willed the damnation of all men conditionally, as he wills their salvation, the condition of damnation being something which the sinner might refuse to do, as is the case with the condition of salvation; and then had God threatened him with salvation, if he would not comply with the condition of damnation, as he has now threatened him with damnation if he does not comply with the condition of salvation, in such case I admit that it would be possible for some men to be saved though God willed the damnation of all men. Do you not of your own self see the fallacy of such difficulties as the above, before you attempt to throw them in my way? You say again, "If you object that though God will have all men to be saved, all are not now saved, I reply, neither is death swallowed up in victory," &c. The swallowing up of death in victory has reference to the general resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 54. Now if you can prove that it is God's will that the dead should all be raised now, thousands of years before many of them live, and, of course, before they die, you will make the cases parallel, but I doubt your being able to do this. God does now will that men should be saved from the commission of guilt and sin, and yet they are not now saved, but God does not now will that death should be swallowed up in victory. Why will you urge objections on so serious a subject, which are so far from being founded in truth, reason, and good sense?

What you say in conclusion, as shown in your former letter, I will dispose of by referring you to what I said in my last in reply to it. Yours, truly, LUTHER LEE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

DEAR SIR:—You re-introduce and enlarge upon the present existence of evil. But why did you not attempt an answer to my confutation of that objection, as presented in Letter 5? After observing profound silence in relation thereto in Letters 6, 8, 10, you now reiterate your false reasoning—yea, you dwell upon it with as much confidence as though I had not offered any thing in the way of reply!

You make especial use of the cited objection in your notice of the infinite peril which (as you allege) are associated with reason and the maturity of life. After mentioning some of the evils of the abuse of hands and stomach, you sagely conclude that the hazard of *endless torment* is as consistent as liability to *any evil whatever*. Doubtless you were greatly pressed for argument, else you would not have resorted to this fallacy. There is proportion between one moment of time, and a century—for both are limited; but there is *no proportion* between all the evils incident to the longest term of human life, and an eternity of woe. Yet you affirm that the latter would be as consistent as the former! Do you mean by this that insanity, idiocy, infancy, may be eternally perpetuated, consistently with the divine plan? Do you mean that the existence of the tooth-ache for one hour, justifies the supposition that any soul of our race may consistently be doomed to immortal pangs? You will discover the radical error of your reasoning, so soon as you learn to discriminate between evil and evil as a *final result*.

Vainly you assert, as an acknowledgement of mine, that "the spirit world may be a world of retribution for the sins of

this life"—for in the first place, your assertion is not true; and in the second place, even a thousand years of punishment would bear no conceivable proportion to the final doom for which you contend.

You flatter yourself that I feel the force of your views and illustrations respecting the heathen—that is, my argument is sorely perplexed by the bare possibility that they may not all be damned!

It is evident that the passages which treat of faith, and the blessings of faith in Jesus Christ, pertain exclusively to such as believe. This you admit; but you have *not offered one word of comment* on my multiplied proofs that they treat only of a *special* salvation enjoyed by believers in the present life. On the contrary, you persist in assuming that the passages referred to, relate to an *ultimate* condition, and you decline furnishing any scriptural evidence of immortal blessedness for infants, idiots or any of the heathen. In my last letter, I presented you the alternative of excluding them altogether, or of admitting Universalism? And how do you answer me? By *virtually* denying a universal resurrection!

The Pharisees held that only a part of our race would be accounted worthy of a resurrection, (which resurrection was indeed but a transmigration of souls;) while the Sadducees wholly denied the doctrine of a future life. Had the *Pharisees* proposed a question on this subject, it would most probably have related to *the number* who would be raised from the dead, and our Saviour would have replied accordingly. But the *Sadducees* simply inquired concerning *the condition* of men in the asserted resurrection state, and to this particular point the answer was directed. It is true, the answer incidentally alluded to the notion of the Pharisees; nevertheless, in Matt. xxii. 23—32 and Mark xii. 18—27, (which are parallel with Luke xx. 27—38) *THE DEAD*, without limitation, are mentioned as the subjects of the immortal resurrection. And in Luke's record, Jesus declared that God "is not the

God of the dead, but of the living, for ALL live unto Him." This perfectly corresponds with Paul's testimony in 1 Cor. xv. 22, 49: "For as in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive. . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

I now present you the choice of three alternatives: 1st. You may join hands with the Sadducees, and wholly deny the doctrine of the resurrection; or 2d. You may take sides with the Pharisees, and hold to the resurrection of only a part of our race; or 3d. You may unite with Christ and Paul in the acknowledgment of an universal resurrection. Carefully note, however, that the latter alternative *is identified with Universalism*—for in the resurrection they "are equal unto the angels, and *are the children of God, BEING the children of the resurrection.*"

Your reply to some of my direct scriptural arguments shall next be attended to. In the progress of my review, I may find space for additional proofs.

John xii. 32: "I will draw ALL MEN unto me." In your reply to my argument on this testimony, you do not deny, but the rather seem to admit the absolute character of the words, "I will draw." You however intimate a denial of the universality of the expression, "all men." You might as well deny universality to the terms in 1 Tim. ii. 6, "He gave himself a ransom for all;" or Heb. ii. 9, "He tasted death for every man;" or 1 John ii. 2, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." All these passages refer to the one offering on the cross, and to the results as noted in Col. i. 12, 20. Phil. ii. 9—11. Next, you suppose that the passage may refer to the gathering of a great multitude in this world; but all this would come infinitely short of the comprehensive "all men." And besides, "To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9; and hence he is emphatically denominated "the Lord of ALL." Acts x. 36. Lastly, you

suppose our Saviour may have meant to say that he would draw all men unto him, not designing to save and bless them all! You forget, 1st. That being drawn or coming to God or to Christ, uniformly implies a blessing. "No man can come to me except the Father draw him," John vi. 44. 2d. The passage in review is a promise, rendered absolute by the fulfilment of the condition, "if I be lifted up from the earth;" and the language, "I will draw all men unto me," makes no distinction whatever in the final destiny of those thus drawn to the Savior. If it implies a blessing for *one*, it implies the like blessing for *all*. Your objection that all are not drawn to Christ *now*, was anticipated and answered in the latter part of Letter 7.

Eph. i. 9—11. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will," &c. You gain nothing by restricting the expression, "things in heaven and things in earth," to Jews and Gentiles—for do you deny that Jews and Gentiles comprehend the whole of our race? Prof. Stuart says that the cited expressions "is a common periphrasis of the Hebrew and New Testament writers for the universe." Archbishop Newcome says it signifies "all intelligent beings." So of the phrase *all things*. The Redeemer is "heir of all things," Heb. i. 2. You might as consistently say that there are some of our race of whom he is not the heir, as to deny that the whole body of humanity is referred to in Eph. i. 6—11.

Rom. xi. 32—36. Paul declares that "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon ALL;" and he sums up the whole scope of the divine government, by testifying that "Of Him, [that is; of God as the Father of all,] and to Him, [as the Savior of all], are ALL THINGS, to whom be glory forever. Amen." Your opinion that this testimony is irrelevant to the theme in discussion, will pass for what it is worth. To what final result, besides that of universal subordination to the spirit of our God, can the language be consistently applied.

Rev. v. 13. "And every creature," etc. You make yourself merry at this portion of Holy Writ; and you even crack a joke while striving to convince our readers of the doctrine of endless woe. Doubtless they will accord to you as much credit for this display of your piety and wit as you deserve—though probably not quite so much as you sought. Possibly they may laugh a moment, but in the issue they will regret that you should so widely depart from Christian propriety in treating of so serious a subject.

That the text must not be construed literally, is too evident to require a line of proof. But what then? The revelator multiplied the forms of expression, in order the more forcibly to convey the idea of universality. If you ask why he did not also specify such as were in hell, (by which you mean a place of endless torment) I reply, because he did not believe in the existence of any such place. John uses expressions similar to those used by Paul in Phillipians ii. 8—11. Jesus "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things in heaven*, and *things in earth* and *things under the earth*; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The forms of expression here used, plainly signify universality. Dr. George Campbell says they "include *the whole rational creation*." In this judgment Prof. Stuart coincides. Indeed, I know of no respectable authority to the contrary.

The universal bowing down, and the universal confession that Jesus Christ is Lord, clearly imply the final issue for which I contend. For 1st. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3; and 2d. That confession is to be to the glory of God the Father. A parrot might be taught to repeat the confession, but the utterance of it without an understanding of its import, and a hearty con-

viction of its truth, and a sincere love of the Saviour so acknowledged would be but mockery, it would neither be by the Holy Ghost, nor to the glory of God. And therefore the case of the madman who dwelt among the tombs, and who cried out, "Jesus thou Son of God," will be nothing to the purpose, as an illustration of the confession noted in the text.

For similar reasons, it will be in vain to allege that some will bow and confess willingly, and others unwillingly—for 1st. Paul makes no such distinction; and 2d. An unwilling, forced confession would be hypocritical at the best; and a hypocritical confession can never redound to the glory of the true God.

John, in Rev. v. 13, speaks of the actual accomplishment of what Paul, in the foregoing passage, declared *should be* the result of the Messiah's exaltation. And what an eulogium was the inspired evangelist permitted to hear, as the final consummation of the divine will and purpose! "Blessings, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever." Well might Prof. Stuart say, "If this be not spiritual worship, I am unable to produce a case where worship can be called spiritual and divine. Yea, if there can be any form of language which can express deep devotion, and heartfelt, spiritual adoration and joy, that form of language is here used. It is an eulogium of God, as the Father of all, and of "the Lamb of God, that taketh away *the sin of the world*." John i. 26. It is the result of the deliverance of the WHOLE RATIONAL CREATION from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God; and is it any thing marvellous that the WHOLE RATIONAL CREATION should unite in that thrilling eulogium of God and the lamb? To what event in the whole history of our race, or to what event spoken of as yet future, can this testimony be applied, unless it be to the dispensation of the fullness of times, when all things shall be gathered together in the Anointed of our God?

1. Tim. iv. 10. "God is the SAVIOR OF ALL MEN, specially of them who believe." In your summary disposal of this testimony, you inform me, in substance that God is not the Savior of all men, but ONLY such as believe. The mere offer of salvation cannot constitute Him the Savior of *any* man. "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were," said to Abraham even before the birth of Isaac, "I have made thee a father of many nations." Rom. iv. 17. You might as well affirm that Abraham was made the father of a nation that will never be born, as that God is the Savior of any whom He will never save. Remember, moreover, that *only* and *especially* are words of entirely different import. Paul employs the latter, but your assumption implies that he ought to have used the former.

1 Tim. ii. 4—6. "God will have ALL MEN to be saved," &c. In your commentary on this passage, you overlook several important considerations. I will mention a few of them.

All the laws given for the government of man must be referred to the sovereign will of the Creator; and they may therefore be summed up in the expression, "the will of God." We read of doing, and of *not* doing his will—that is, of *not* obeying his laws. To this point all your questions are directed, and you seem to triumph, (not in the fact) but in the marvellous discovery, that in this sense the will of God is not always done.

That the commandments of God are not universally obeyed, is surely so evident, that you should have felt justified in assuming it. Instead of this, however, you proceed with your argument, as though the doctrine of Universalism would be utterly overthrown, if you could only prove that mankind universally do not *now* love God with the whole heart! Did not the thought occur to you, that your reasoning bears as strongly against the final holiness and happiness of *any* of our race, as it does against a blessed immortality for all mankind?

In conferring moral agency on man, God did not abandon *his own* moral agency: and in submitting a code of laws to his creatures, he neither resigned his sovereignty, nor abdicated the throne of universal dominion. The will of God, in the sense of a law, is *one* thing: the will of God, as applied to what he has determined to do is another. The latter circumscribes the former, and is the guaranty of final fulfilment. Speaking of his covenant with the corrupt house of Isreal, the Lord said, "*I will* put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I *will* be to them a God, and they *shall* be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know thou the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Heb. viii, 10, 11. For the purpose of this argument, it matters not to what *period* this covenant refers, or by what *means* it will be consummated. The language declares what *God will do*, by his own direct agency, or *will have done*, by the agents and means of his own appointment.

The assurance that "God will have *ALL MEN* to be saved," differs not from the preceding in its *character*, but merely in its *extent*. When the law of God is written in the heart and mind; this is the salvation wrought by a knowledge of the truth. In neither of the cited cases, is his will noted in the subordinate sense of a commandment, but as a determinate purpose or will of the supreme God; and he doeth according to his *will* in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand." Dan. iv. 35. Yet you unwarrantably assume conditions where none are either expressed or implied; and then you argue that the final result of the divine government would in no wise be varied, had the apostle declared that God will have all men to be damned!

But you say all are not saved *now*. Granted; neither was Saul of Tarsus saved when he consented to the stoning of Stephen—yet Paul anticipated and denied the validity of this

oft-repeated objection of yours, more than seventeen centuries ago! I pressed this fact upon your attention in several of my letters, but you pass it by with your usual self-complacency. Paul says,—“Thou hast put ALL THINGS in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, HE LEFT NOTHING that is *not* put under him.” Here we have a declaration, not simply of what God *will do* or *will have done*, but of what *he had* ALREADY done. Yet Paul adds “But *now* we see NOT YET all things put under him.” Universal subordination to Christ, and consequent universal salvation, is the final result. It is *now* God’s will to effect it, but it is NOT YET effected; nevertheless, it shall be consummated in the times and seasons which the Father hath put it in his own power.” Acts i. 7. It embraces the resurrection from the dead. “He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from ALL faces. Isa. xxv. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 54.

This subject is luminously treated in 1 Cor. xv. . The apostle declares that Christ “must reign till he hath put *all enemies* under his feet.” What those enemies are, may be inferred from the fact that *death is the last of the series*. Death does not belong to any race of beings. It is of the same class as sin, the bondage of corruption, and evil of every sort.

After noting the destruction of death as the completion of the purpose to destroy *all enemies*, the apostle proceeds as follows:—“For he hath put all things under his feet;” and then, lest he should be misunderstood to teach that *even the Supreme Being* was included in the universal subordination to Christ, he adds, “But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is EXCEPTED which did put all things under him.” This special mention of God as an exception, excludes the idea of any other exception. “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, [plainly implying a time when all things *will be* subordinate to the Messiah]

then shall the Son also be subject unto him that did put all things under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL."

In your brief comment on James i. 18, you advance the queer notion that the *Jews were the first fruits of the Gentiles*. No, sir; the *gospel believers*, whether of Jewish or Gentile extraction, were the 'first fruits'. God begat them of *his own will*, by the agency of the word of truth, as shown in my last letter. And Paul testifies that *not the believers only*, but the creature, "*the whole creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the CHILDREN OF GOD.*" Rom. viii.

Patently waiting your promised reply to my argument on the last cited testimony, and desiring the closest review of all my positions and proofs, I am yours, &c.

ABEL C. THOMAS.

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR:—What you say about my having re-introduced the present existence of evil, serves merely to cover up your evasion of my argument. The point in my argument was, that if any such thing as *real* evil to any one member of the human family be permitted by God, however small it may be, it breaks in upon the principle of your argument, and shows that evil is consistent with the divine paternity, a larger evil may be consistent, and if so one still greater, *ad infinitum*. This shows that you have got to deny the existence of evil, or give up your argument, founded on the divine paternity and the goodness of God. I called on you to do this distinctly, but you pass it by in silence. Tell me plainly does real evil exist, or is sin, so called, in fact as great a blessing as righteousness?

But you have attempted to destroy the force of my reasoning, by saying that there is no comparison or proportion between limited evil or suffering, and endless evil or endless suffering. This is a favorable point with Universalists, and as you have referred to it once or twice before, I am happy to meet it full in the face. As your defence rests wholly upon the supposed want of comparison between limited and endless evil, if I can show that this position is fallacious, you must yield to the force of my argument drawn from the present existence of evil. I maintain, then, that, admitting the doctrine of endless misery to be true, as generally understood, there will always be strict proportion between the sufferings of the damned and the smallest amount of misery of which you can conceive. Though the punishment will be endless

prospectively, yet it will always be limited in duration, *retro, spectively*, and, hence, there can never come a time when it will not sustain a strict proportion to the first hour of suffering. Though there is no proportion between limited punishment and eternity which lies beyond what the lost will have suffered at any given period, yet, as punishment has a beginning, it can never extend beyond the reach of a comparison with the evil of this life, of a year, a month or a day, and must forever bear some proportion to one moment of anguish in point of duration. This gives to my argument drawn from the present existence of evil, or your admission of the existence of punishment in the future world, great force, and must put you to the necessity of abandoning your argument.

The above must answer for this time on the subject of the divine paternity: I only add that I hope you will meet the question like one who has nothing to disguise; a man who has confidence in his own principles does not wish to conceal them, and he who aims only to oppose error, will not evade a point but meet it.

I will now pay some attention to your defence of our scriptural arguments. It is worthy of remark that you have not attempted any progress in the argument, but only attempted to sustain your former positions, against my reply. All I have to do, therefore, is to show that my positions and expositions in reply to your arguments, are not overthrown by your rejoinder. John xii. 32. "I will draw all men unto me." I gave my exposition of this text in my last, which in substance, was that, it refers to the results of the gospel in this world.

1. The expression of "all men" does not necessarily imply that every individual will come to Christ in your sense of the term. I called your attention to the fact that the Pharisees complained in the 19th verse, saying, "behold the world is gone after him." The world is as comprehensive as all men, and yet it did not include every individual, but merely meant

that the multitude had gone with Christ; and it was, probably, with reference to this statement, that Christ said, "I will draw *all* men unto me," meaning no more than that his religion should become general. In Matt. iii. 5, it is said, "Then went out to him Jerusalem and ALL Judea, and ALL the region round about Jordan," but no one supposes every individual went.— In Luke ii. 1, it is said, "there went out a decree from [Cæsar: that ALL the world should be taxed." In John iv. 29, the woman said, "Come see a man which told me ALL that ever I did." But he had told her only a part of what she had done. In Phil. ii. 21, St. Paul says, "ALL seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Thus it is seen that the term ALL is used to express what is only common or general, without being universal.

2. The term "*will draw*," does not mean an absolute and irresistible influence, or a certain and universal coming to Christ. What is meant by Christ drawing men? How does he do it? I answer, He does it by the influence of his truth and the Holy Spirit. He has been drawing them ever since his resurrection, but some come at his drawing, while others resist the influences by which he draws them. Nothing then can be meant more than that he will employ gospel influences to bring all men to him. You refer to John vi. 44. "No man can come to me except the Father that sent me draw him." Christ is here manifestly speaking of coming to him in this life, whereas, his drawing all men unto him, you refer to the future world, and have more than once referred to the general resurrection as its accomplishment. Such sir, is your straight path. All that you say of denying that certain other texts refer to all men, is mere assertion. As the text most obviously relates to what Christ does in this world, it possesses irresistible force, and is not to be disposed of by saying that it had been anticipated.

Eph. i.—11. On this you say I gain nothing by restricting the expression "things in heaven and things in earth" to Jews

and Gentiles, because Jews and Gentiles comprehend the whole of our race. Here you overlook my argument. My argument did not rest on the supposition that Jews and Gentiles do not include all men, but on the fact that the text, referring to the organization of the Gospel Church out of these two great branches of the human family. It does not imply the salvation of every individual, and cannot, as, in such case, it refers to the operations of the Gospel in this world, and describes what is done in this world, and it needs no proof to show that all are not saved in this world.

Rev. v. 13. You accuse me of cracking a joke in my remarks on this text. Surely, sir, you misunderstand me; but I really thought your application of this text was a joke, and nothing surprises me more than your serious attempt to vindicate that application. But you have entirely overlooked the real point in my reply. My ground was that the text described events which have or will take place in this world and therefore cannot refer to the salvation of all men, which you date at the general resurrection. How, sir, as you have more than once dated the salvation of all men at the general resurrection, I will prove to you as clear as a sun-beam, that this text cannot refer to that event.

1. The 9th and 10th verses represent the saints as singing a song of praise to the Lamb, saying, "Thou art worthy, &c. for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us unto God kings and priests, and we shall REIGN ON THE EARTH." Men shall be living on the earth subsequent to the event described in the text, and therefore it cannot refer to the general resurrection, or to any period subsequent to the resurrection, for the present state of things will then cease. This earth will have an end and will not be the residence of the finally blessed.

2. The transaction described in the text, is described as taking place before the opening of the seven seals. It was when the Lamb took the book (verse 8) that the song de-

scribed in the 13th verse was sung, but it was before any one of the seals were opened. From this it follows that the events which occurred on the opening of the seals, were after what is described in verse 13, which you say implies universal holiness. What then took place, or is to take place after the salvation of all men? The first seal was opened (chap. vi. 1. 2) "behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and he went forth conquering and to conquer." The second seal, verses 3, 4, "And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth," &c. What a glorious reign of Universalism there will be in those days! The fourth seal, verses 7, 8, "And behold a pale horse and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto him over the fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword," &c., and so on to the end of the chapter. Now, sir, all these events, beyond all doubt, have or must take place after what you say describes the salvation of all men. It is my opinion they have taken place, but whether they have or have not, they fill up a period in the history of man, subsequently to that period when you suppose all to be saved and made holy and happy. Can any one conceive of any thing more absurd than to argue the final holiness and happiness of all men from this text? I will not say you "crack a joke," it is worse; it is mockery. As you connect this event to the gathering together all things in Christ, and of the deliverance of the creature from the bondage of corruption, it is sufficient to ruin your entire argument founded on this class of texts, without any farther effort of mine.

You refer to Phil. ii. 8—11, and 1 Cor. xii. 3, and then say, "John, in Rev. v. 13, speaks of the actual accomplishment of what St. Paul said should be the result." Therefore, by showing, as I have, that Rev. v. 13 does not refer to the final salvation of men, I have proved that St. Paul never described universal salvation, as the final result, if you are right in connecting the texts.

1 Tim. iv. 10. If, as you contend, God is not the Saviour of all men *because* he has provided salvation for all, and offers it to all, then he cannot be the Savior of all *until he shall actually save all*, and of course, he is not the Savior of all, for he has not saved all.

But I maintain that, in providing salvation for all, and offering it to all, he does actually become the Savior of all men, in a very important sense. Every man forfeits his very earthly existence by sin, and hence to put all within the reach of final salvation there must be a suspension of the sentence of the law, and a respite, and a day and means of grace granted, and the offer of final and special salvation made on Gospel terms. All this God has done for us, and this a great salvation of itself, and in this sense he is the Savior of all men; but he is a Savior in a higher sense to them that believe. They are saved from guilt and enjoy peace with God now. Rom. v. i. This is all plain, and no doubt, it is the true meaning of the text. Where is the sinner that has not already been saved in this common and universal sense? But there are many who do not enjoy the special salvation of believers.

1 Tim. ii. 4. "God will have all men to be saved." The whole of your sophistry bestowed upon this text, may be met in few words.

1. Does the text mean that God wills to save all men, or that he merely wills them "to be saved," by obeying his law? If the former, then you must admit that God does not will the salvation of all men now, and that it is not man's fault that all are not now saved, but God's purpose that prevents it; if the latter be true, then God's will is expressed in the text, is only the will of his law, which you admit is not always done.

2. Your remark that "the will of God, in the sense of a law, is one thing; the will of God as applied to His determination to do, is another," is against yourself, for the text clearly express "the will of God as a law." The text does not say that God wills to save *all men*, unconditionally, but

that he "will have them *to be saved*, and *to come to the knowledge of the truth*. This clearly expresses the will of God concerning the conduct of men, and therefore is his "will in the sense of a law."

3. As salvation cannot exist without obedience to the divine law, unless "the will of God in the sense of a law," is not absolute as "the will of God when applied to his determination to do," nothing is gained to your cause by the distinction. If sinners may resist God's will as a law, they may never be saved, for their salvation depends upon their conformity to the law.

4. Your distinction between "the will of God as a law," and "the will of God as a purpose to do," places God's law and purposes at variance with each other. If God does not absolutely control men, they may never submit to his law, and hence, may never be saved; and if he does absolutely control men, then your distincting supposes that he gives men a law to obey, and at the same time so controls them that they break that law. That is, according to your theory, "the will of God in the sense of a law, is one thing," and "the will of God as applied to His determination to do," is something directly opposed to it. Such, sir, is the result of your effort to wrest the above text from the force of my reply.

Yours, for the truth,

LUTHER LEE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

DEAR SIR:—You re-assert that *final* evil would be as consistent with the divine character and government, as is the existence of any evil whatever. I have repeatedly shown the falsity of this position—but you persist in not discriminating between what is consistent in the *progress* of a plan, and what may consistently be allowed in the *issue*.

When I look at the *plan* of a magnificent edifice, as it appears in the drawing of the architect, I say that there is neither scaffolding or rubbish. If, being persuaded of his determination and ability to construct and finish the edifice, I look forward to the *completion*, I repeat the statement. It is only when I view the *progress* of the work, that I can properly speak of either scaffolding or rubbish. The former may be considered *necessary*, the latter *incidental*. Yet, according to your theory, if they may consistently be allowed in the *progress* of the work, they may consistently remain around the building indefinitely! Yea, you insist that I must either wholly deny the existence of any real scaffolding and rubbish, or admit that their existence may be perpetuated so long as the world shall endure, and this, too, consistently with the original plan. Luke xiv. 28—30.

If you desire scriptural examples of the principle involved in the preceding illustration, you may turn to the middle third of Letter v. When you find it convenient, I should be happy to receive a reply to the argument therein presented.

In the preface of your review of my scriptural proofs, you say, "it is worthy of remark that you have not attempted any progress in the argument," &c. It is far more worthy of re-

mark that this statement is not true. Take, for example, my exposition of 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28. This was first introduced in my last letter. So of Phil. ii. 6—11. Moreover you have not replied to my argument on Heb. ii. 3, nor on Romans viii. 18—23. You also utterly neglect my exposition of Luke xx. 36, and the accompanying alternatives. Yet you venture the assertion, that I did not attempt any progress in my last letter!

In striving to evade my argument on John xii. 32, you quote several passages in which the words *all* and *world* are manifestly used in a limited sense—but you have not furnished a jot of proof that the phrase in the text is of a like character. Jesus “gave himself a ransom for ALL. . . . Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the WORLD.”—1 Tim. ii. 6, John i. 29. Would you illustrate these *doctrinal facts* by the *historical hyperboles*, that ALL Judea had gone out to John’s baptism, and that the WORLD had gone after Jesus? The condition, “if I be lifted up,” relates to the death on the cross, and the comprehensiveness of the promise, “I will draw *all men* unto me,” must be determined by the general tenor of the testimonies concerning the crucifixion. Do you deny universality to the atonement, or to the *object* of the Messiah’s mission? You do not; and if Jesus had said, “I will *offer* to draw all men unto me,” you would have admitted universality; and clung to conditionality; but since conditionality is excluded by the absolute “I will,” you unwarrantably deny universality, lest Universalism should be established by that single text!

I deny your assumption that “the text most obviously relates to what Christ does by gospel influence in this world,” and in this exclusively. Both the absoluteness of the expressed will, and the universality of the phrase employed, forbid such an exposition. Jesus did not say, I will *try* to draw all men unto me—nor, I will draw as many to me as I can—nor, I will draw as many to me as are *willing* to be

drawn—nor, I will draw awhile, and then withdraw my influences,—but he said simply and plainly, “*I will draw all men unto me.*” There is no limitation of means, number or time; and if the promise implies a blessing to *one* of our race, it implies a like blessing to *ALL*. This topic is illustrated in the latter part of Letter vii.

Eph. i. 9—11. You repeat your *opinion* that this passage simply teaches the formation of a gospel church on earth—, but you do not furnish a particle of proof. The comprehensive phrase “all things” forbids your opinion. “Jesus is appointed heir of all things.” Heb. i. 2. “God put all things in subjection under him, though we see not yet all things put under him.” Heb. ii. 8; “he is able to subdue all things to himself.” Phil. iii. 21; and we read of a period when all things, *God only excepted*, shall be subdued unto him.” 1 Cor. xv. 38. You might as properly restrict the phrase “all things” in these citations, as to restrict it in the text. They all relate to the universal proprietorship and mediatorial work of the Messiah; and the accomplishment of that work is guaranteed by the WILL, GOOD PLEASURE and PURPOSE of God.

Rev. v. 13. You deny that I have rightly applied this passage, and you promise to make the denial “as clear as a sun-beam.” You, however, promised much, and accomplished little, as may be readily shown.

You foolishly argue that because John described the opening of the seals *after* he described the event in chap. v. 13, *therefore*, that universal eulogium preceded the opening of the seals! I say *foolishly*—for there is nothing more common with historians, biographers and prophets, than to follow a train of circumstances to its results, and then to recur to the starting point, and to pursue a subordinate train of incidents. That the revelator adopted this method, may be seen by consulting the context.

In the commencement of the chapter there is a book mentioned. Previously to the unfolding of the events therein

recorded, John noted the kings and priests who were to cooperate with Christ in his mediatorial reign on earth, verses 8—10. Jesus promised that his apostles should sit on thrones in the regeneration, that is, the progress of his kingdom. Matt. xiv. 18: Luke xxii. 29, 30. To this the revelator alludes, though a literal interpretation is not admissible in either of the cited passages. He then passes to notice the adoration of thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of the redeemed. Had he paused here, he would have furnished me no argument. Hitherto you see nothing of "a joke" in the testimony. But he proceeded, in verse 13, to embrace the *universe* of intelligent beings in the triumphs of the Redeemer, and here your objection begins. You admit final holiness and happiness for the thousand times ten thousand; and by what rule of exigesis do you deny it in the case of the *whole rational creation*? The latter is testified in immediate connexion with the former. You admit that universality is expressed by the terms in verse 12: and I challenge you to quote any phraseology which more vividly denotes heartfelt adoration and joy, than is denoted by the universal eulogium therein recorded.

Having thus followed the absorbing theme to its results, John returns to the book, and proceeded to the opening of the seals. They relate to the final abolition of the law covenant, and the establishment of the gospel. This is evident from the fact that the first of them describes the going forth of the Conqueror, whereas the universal eulogium which John heard, is a prophetic description of the consummation of the Messiah's kingdom.

In letter xii. you wrote very wittily about "Levithian and codlings" uniting in the song of the divine praise; yet in letter viii. in endeavoring to prove that some of our race will certainly be saved, you quoted Rev. vii. 9.—That passage occurs between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals—but you apply to time yet future, even to the immortal state.

The immediate connection declares that four beasts united with angels and elders in an ascription of glory to the most high God. Did you offer this testimony as a "joke?" So it would seem, according to *your own showing*, and your work of "mockery" will be completed, so soon as you illustrate your view of the four beasts by another quotation from the Psalmody of the Pilgrim Fathers.

In Letter ix. I presented you an argument on Rom. viii. You promised to review it, *if I requested* you to do so! Notwithstanding my formal request, you have not dared to attempt the promised review. And now, after five week's silence, you seek to evade it altogether by assuming that I have *misapplied* Rev. v. 13! You doom Phil. ii. 8—11 to the same fate, because I associated it with the two preceding passages! This wholesale cancelling of divine testimony may consist with your definition of a good conscience; but that it is either candid or honest, our readers will probably doubt.

1st. You say that Rev. v. 13, describes either what took place long ago, or will yet take place in this world; yet you do not support your blind opinion, by naming any event, past, present or future, to which that testimony can possibly apply, unless it be to the final result of the Conqueror's reign. Tell me, sir, when has the whole rational creation every sung, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto God and the Lamb. When *can* the whole rational creation unite in that eulogium, unless it be in the immortal resurrection state?

2d. A universal bowing down, and a universal confession that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, is explicitly testified in Phil. ii. 8—21. Paul quotes from Isa. xlv. 23, (omitting the word *one* supplied by the translators:) "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Will you pretend that this event has *already* taken place? When can

all intelligent beings unite in the acknowledgement that Jesus is Lord, unless it be in a final result of his mediatorial kingdom?

3d. Paul testified that *not believers only*, but the creation; the whole creation itself **ALSO** shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into *the glorious liberty of THE CHILDREN OF GOD*; yea, that not only *they* but the *believers themselves* **ALSO** waited for the adoption; even the redemption of the whole groaning creation. Will you pretend that the event here described refers to any period short of the immortal resurrection?

If you do not reply to these questions, fairly and frankly, and if you do not answer my arguments on these passages, severally, I will submit to the judgment of impartial men; that you feel yourself incompetent to the task.

1. Tim. iv. 10. Your expression of this testimony is based in the bare assertion of a forfeiture of earthly existence by sin. In your previous letter, you said that God is the Savior of all men because He offers salvation to all; but now you change your ground, and maintain that He is the Savior of all because he has suspended your asserted sentence of the law! A man is in danger of drowning, and you claim to be his savior because you *offer* to save him. Next, you claim to be his savior because you hold him up awhile, and then let him down!

You say, however, that God cannot be the Savior of all, until He shall actually save all. I anticipated this objection in my last letter. The Lord said to Abraham, not, I *offer* to make thee, but) "*I have made the father of many nations; and this declaration of what God had already done, was uttered even before the child was born from whom the nations spring. See my quotation on Rom. iv. 17, and accompanying comment.*

1 Tim. ii. 4—6. You claim that this passage merely expresses the will of God concerning the conduct of all men,

that is, in the sense of a law. This is the basis of your whole argument. I reply.

1st. The salvation which God wills in the text, is associated with coming to the knowledge of the truth. What truth? Ans. "In whom ye also trusted *after* that ye heard *the word of truth*, the gospel of your salvation," Eph. i. 13. "Of *His own will* beget he us with *the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures," James i. 18. The *first fruits* were gathered by the determinate will of God; and yet you suppose that he merely *commands the harvest* to come in!

2d. The apostle adds, "For there is one God and one Mediator—who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." These truths have an important bearing on the text; and the whole connection shows, that the one God wills all men to be saved *by the one Mediator*. The will rests on him, and all men are subjects of the salvation which God appointed him to effect. "The Father sent the Son to be *the Savior of the world*," 1 John iv. 14. The end sought is universal subordination to himself; and that this result will finally be attained, I have abundantly proved in my arguments on John xii. 32. 1 Cor. xvi. 27, 28. Heb. ii. 8. Your objection that all men are, not subordinate and saved *now*, was answered in my last letter.

You say, however, that my distinction between the law and purposes of God, places them at variance. No, sir, but the rather shows them to be harmonious. The copy written by the teacher of penmanship for the imitation of his pupils is fashioned in the likeness of his final purpose, namely to bring them to proficiency in art. The law of God is fashioned in the likeness of his ultimate will, namely, the final obedience and blessedness of his universal family. The final purpose of the teacher is indicated by the copy presented to his pupils would not turn him from, nor defeat his final purpose; and the absolute will and authority of God establish the po-

sition, that though this law may for a season be violated by the frailty or perversity of man, it shall be ultimately and univesally fulfilled.

That the Redeemer absolutely controlled Saul of Tarsus, ~~and~~ making him a minister and witness of the truth, will not be denied; but does it follow that the Savior had so controlled him previously, as to produce a violation of the law of love in his many persecutions? By no means.

This single case answers your main objection, that according to my theory the law and purpose of God are opposed. It also invalidates your position, that "salvation depends upon conformity to the law"—by which you mean, that non-conformity to the law is a bar to salvation. It is non-conformity alone, which renders salvation necessary. 2 Tim. i. 9. Titus iii. 4—6.

It is *your* theory that places the law and purpose of God at variance. To love him supremely and man universally, is the whole sum of the law. Yet, according to your view, God has proposed to doom millions of our race to a condition in which obedience to that law will be utterly impossible.

I have not space for the additional proofs intended for this letter; nevertheless you will not complain of lack of matter to review, if you give heed to the arguments already before you. Besides Rom. viii. and Phil. ii. which you are so extremely solicitous to evade, your attention is invited to 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28, 54, and Heb. ii. 8. I also wish to know which of the three alternatives you will choose, as noted in my comment on Luke xx. 36.

Hoping you will not postpone these matters to 'more convenient season' of your last letter,

I am respectfully yours,
ABEL C. THOMAS.

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR:—Of the texts heretofore introduced, I have given my opinion and expositions, which I need not repeat. The texts noticed in my last you repeat, simply denying my expositions without argument, and repeating your former views against which my expositions were directed. Now, sir, I shall not waste my time with such trifling, but leave the matter for the judgement of our readers, with the exception of a few points, which I will notice as specimens of *your wisdom* in contrast with what you call *my foolishness*.

On Rev. v. 13. You say I “*foolishly* argue that because John described the opening of the seals *after* he described the event in chap. v. 13, *therefore* that universal eulogium preceded the opening of the seals.” You mistake the real ground of my argument. It is not founded on the *simple* fact that it is mentioned first in John’s description, for I do not contend that prophetic descriptions always place events in the precise order, in point of time which they transpire, but my argument is, that the circumstances of the case, and the relation which the two events sustain to other events renders the order of time certain, for which I contend. You appear to be wonderfully capable of overlooking my arguments, when you are incapable of meeting the real point.—I will once more try to make this subject plain.

1. The event described in the thirteenth verse took place on the occasion of the Lamb’s taking the book with the seals. This is so plain that I can see it, *foolish as you think me*, and hence, it is very strange that a man of your wisdom should overlook it. It is thought by many that great minds are more apt to overlook very plain things than more simple and unassuming minds. “When he took the book,” verse 8, “the four beasts and four and twenty elders” commenced a song of praise to the Lamb. Verse 11: Many angels round the throne joined in it; and at verse 13, every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea, took up the strain. It is then, perfectly plain

that the event in dispute took place on the occasion of the Lamb's taking the book.

2. The Lamb must have taken the book before he opened the seals thereof, and *therefore*, the opening of the seals must be subsequent to this song of praise. The age of the world in which all this did or will take place cannot effect the argument. In whatever age of the world the Lamb did or shall take the books, preparatory to opening the seals, this song was or will be sung: and when the Lamb did or shall open the seals, then the events following did or shall take place. Now as the events said to take place at the opening of the seals, are connected with the existence of sin, misery and death, and as these events are often described in the thirteenth verse, that verse cannot describe the final holiness and happiness of all men.

Another view of this subject will show the absurdity of your application of it. You say the text will receive its accomplishment at the general resurrection, or all will be rendered holy and happy at that time, and hence the song of the 13th verse cannot be sung, according to your theory, until the resurrection, which must give the song a place in the future world. Now how plain it is that the description is wholly inapplicable to that period.

1. The description clearly denotes distinct divisions of mankind, marked by their distinct residences or places of abode, as in heaven, in earth, under the earth, and in the seas, but after the general resurrection there will be no such division of the saints, they shall all dwell in heaven, dwell in one society.

2. There will be no earth with sea, after the general resurrection. "The earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." 2 Peter, iii. 10.—"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," &c. "And the sea gave up the dead," &c. Rev. xx. 11, 12, 13.—"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was *no more sea*." Yet the text in dispute represents the song as being sung by the inhabitants of earth and sea. This certainly proves

that the text describes an event that will take place, if it has not already taken place, while the earth and sea remain, and hence it will take place in this world and not in the next. I have paid the more attention to this text because you have given it such an importance in the class of texts upon which you rely, as to make the whole stand or fall with this, and as I have, as I trust, taken out your key text, your whole argument must fall. I need not trouble myself further, until you give up this text and separate it from others on which you rely.

You call on me to reply to your argument on Rom. viii. and say I "have not dared to attempt the promised review." Every body knows that Luther Lee is a coward especially when Universalists are his opponents! But in the argument to which you refer, if it be called an argument, you connected it with Rev. v. 13, so that the whole depended upon the correct application of that text, and as I fully met that exposition, I thought it sufficient, and still think so.— Had I space I would willingly write a commentary on Rom. viii. for your accommodation, but as it is, I have only time to remark that the verse you refer to, like Rev. v. 13, relates to things to take place in this world. By the creature, I understand the Gentiles in contradistinction to the Jews, and their deliverance is from the corruptions of Gentileism into the privileges and enjoyments of Christians. Of me you say, "You say that God cannot be a Saviour of all until he shall actually save all." I anticipated this objection in my last letter. The Lord said to Abraham, (not I offer to make thee, but) "*I have made thee* a father of many nations." But, sir, how did God do it? by *making* him a father before he was a father, or by *calling* things that were not as though they were?

This must suffice for this letter. As to your threat of appealing to our readers if I do not meet your arguments so and so, it must pass for what it is worth. If it becomes necessary to sum up this account, I venture I can make as long a chapter of what you have passed in silence as you can produce

Yours for the truth,

LUTHER LEE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

DEAR SIR:—In the preface to your notice of my direct proofs, you assert what is not true. You say that I simply deny your “expositions without argument,” and that I merely re-quote the texts and repeat my former views!—Now, sir, I heartily join in submitting the matter to our readers. I moreover urge them to compare our reasoning. The texts you refer to are John xii. 32, I will draw *all men* unto me; Eph. i. 9—11, the will and purpose of God to gather *all things* together in Christ; 1 Tim. ii. 4—6, God will have *all men* to be saved; 1 Tim. iv. 10, God is the Saviour of *all men*.

In the close of your letter, you refer to my argument on the last cited passage and sagely inquire *how* God constituted Abraham the father of many nations? Ans. By absolute purpose and promise. He speaks of things in the remotest futurity, with as much certainty as if they already existed, and of final results as though already attained.

Rev. v. 13. There can be little doubt that the opening of the seals relates to events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem. Compare ch. vi. 16 and Luke xxiii. 30. Subsequently the revelator describes the second death of the Jewish nation, in the destruction of the city and temple by Titus—(the first national death having been inflicted by Nebuchadnezzar.) Chap. xxi., treats of the descent of *New* Jerusalem, plainly signifying the establishment of the Gospel kingdom on earth, after the final abolition of the Mosaic covenant.

But the elucidation of the text does not require a consideration of these topics, as I will show in a few words. *Your* position is, that the event described in Rev. v. 13, occurred *previously* to the opening of the seals; *my* position is, that it is a prophetic description of a *subsequent* event. I will now state two facts, and our readers shall decide which of us is in error.

1. The eulogium, blessings, and glory, and honor, &c., as vividly expressed the most heart-felt adoration and joy

as is any where expressed in Holy Writ. It is even more vivid than the song of the elders, yea, than even the song of the thousand times ten thousand angels; and if these songs imply holiness and happiness, so also does the eulogium in verse 13. Hence Prof. Stuart says, "If this be not spiritual worship, I am unable to produce a case where worship can be called spiritual and divine." Now, sir, will you pretend that the woes under the seals were inflicted on men *after*, yea, immediately after, they became the spiritual worshippers of God?

2. The terms of the text are as strongly expressive of universality as are any terms employed by any inspired writer. They are all-comprehensive. Dr. Campbell says "they include *the whole rational creation*." Will you pretend that mankind universally have yet become the spiritual worshippers of God? or that any woes of any sort will be inflicted on them after they *do* become worshippers?

If you will answer these questions fairly and frankly, every candid person will be enabled to determine which of the two positions is the correct one, yours or mine.

Your attempt to justify utter neglect of other passages, on the score that I associated them with the preceding, is worse than trifling. I aim to prove the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, and all my arguments, being directed to that point, are associated in the most important sense. You have no right to sit in judgment on their relative importance. Even admitting a misapplication of one—does it follow that another is misapplied? Why not make short work, and sweep them all by the board, excepting one? And why not select Rom. viii. as the exception? When first presented, it stood alone, occupying a prominent station—whereas, Rev. v. was first introduced incidentally. The latter became prominent by reason of your neglect of the former; and now you desire to make every thing depend upon a passage which you say I have misapplied!

After cogitating my argument on Rom. viii. for the incredible short space of six weeks, you present the following comprehensive review: "By the creature, I understand the Gentiles in contradistinction from the Jews; and their de-

liverance is from the corruption of Gentileism into the privileges and enjoymments of Christians."

Yes, sir, you reply at the generous rate of less than one line per week. The aggregate is your authoritative *opinion*, and you seem to think that I ought to be thankful for even that! You "understand" the passage to mean thus and so, and this must suffice, without a solitary word of proof. But do you suppose our readers will be satisfied? I simply request them to re-peruse my argument in the close of Letter ix. and compare it with your reply. I will cheerfully abide their judgment.

And now I demand some sort of an attempt to substantiate your opinion by evidence. Assign your reasons for limiting the phrase, **THE WHOLE CREATION**, to the Gentiles. Consider the scope of the testimony to verse 24 inclusive, and then furnish a consistent exposition on the basis of your asserted apostolic meaning. Let your commentary be written with my argument before you. If you do not comply with this equitable demand, but persist in your unsupported opinion or relapse into silence, the cause will be obvious without confession. It will be your own fault, if your boastful ironical remark, "Every body knows that Luther Lee is a coward," should become an acknowledged historical fact.

I make a similar demand in relation to Phil. ii. 8—11, Isa. xlv. 53. You have hitherto utterly neglected my arguments on these passages. Consider these joint-testimonies without any reference to Rev. v. 13, and then explain them so as to avoid the conclusion of Universalism, if you can. Or if you will do nothing more, inform us merely what you "understand" them to teach, or be as honest as the Jews were, and confess that you cannot tell.

In like manner, I demand some sort of an attempt to set aside my reasoning on 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28, and Heb. ii. 8, severally. You have not yet attended to these arguments, nor even so much as referred to them. And while you are in the way of exposition, explain to our readers what conclusion besides the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, can be drawn from Isa. xxv. 8, the reference of which is noted in 1 Cor. xv. 54.

Moreover, you maintain profound silence in relation to my argument on Luke xx. 37, and accompanying alternatives. I desire to know what disposition you will make of that divine testimony and its adjuncts.

You, however, threaten to make out a catalogue of my omissions, if I insist on an answer to the preceding arguments! Proceed at your earliest convenience. You may possibly find a few items among your many irrelative sayings, to which I have given no heed; but here are six or seven of *my principal arguments*, and the sum total of your comment is four or five lines! Your procedure is a practical disregard of "all established rules of discussion and of the courtesy due to an opponent, and is worthy only of a bad cause and of a defeated disputant." I question whether a parallel can be found in the annals of controversy.

If you feel justified in thus evading my proofs, it would seem useless to present additional evidence. Nevertheless I will proceed with my argument, hoping you will repent of your neglect, and bring forth the fruits of that repentance in your next letter.

I have abundantly shown, and you have not denied, that universality is stamped on the promise of God in Christ.—The Gospel preached to Abraham, and the proclamation of it in the New Testament, clearly prove that the final holiness and happiness of all mankind is at least *the object* of the heavenly economy. You do not object to the universality of *the design*—for you have admitted that it was the plan and purpose of God to bring His universal family into union with Himself. This admission was distinctly made in noticing my citation of Col. i. 20: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile *all things* to Himself."

Now besides the fact that the Supreme Being is not obnoxious to the mocking charge that He began what He is not able to finish, we have the positive testimony, spoken of Christ, that "the pleasure of the Lord *shall* prosper in his hand," Isa. liii. 10. And what is signified by the prospering of the divine pleasure, may be learned from chap. lv. 10, 11: "As the rain cometh down and, &c., so shall my

word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it *shall accomplish that which I please*, and it *shall prosper* in the thing whereto I sent it." So also in ch. xlv. 23.

Conformably to this testimony, we are assured that the Messiah "shall see of the travail of his soul, and *shall be satisfied*," Isa. liii. 11. The work of universal reconciliation was committed to him, and he is "able to subdue even all things unto himself." Will he be satisfied with less than the complete accomplishment of the work in which he is engaged?

I John ii. 2: "Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins, (namely, of those who were then believers,) and not for ours only, but ALSO for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD." Dr. Clark says this text includes *all mankind*; and he adds, that any "attempt to limit it is a violent outrage against God and His word." I know not why this remark is not equally applicable to any attempted limitation of THE WHOLE CREATION in Rom. viii. 22. Our readers will please compare the two passages.

Jesus Christ the righteous is denominated "my righteous servant" in Isa. liii. 11: and of him the Lord says, "he shall justify many," or rather *the many*, which expression, as you will not deny, is here equivalent to *all mankind*.

In Rom. v. 18, 19, Paul says, "As by the offence of one judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life." The first member of the sentence has a glorious counterpart in the second. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." You will not dispute the comprehensiveness of the expression, the *many*, as here used. You admit that it signifies universality—and such is the testimony of Parkhurst, Clarke, McKnight, &c. Employing the language of the latter in noting the *extent*, we have the positive declaration, that, "ALL MANKIND, *without exception*," SHALL BE MADE RIGHTEOUS. The *obedience* of Christ is mentioned in Phil. ii. 8—11, as the basis of a universal bowing down and a universal confession that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the

Father; and in Isa. xlv. 23, it is testified that "every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

If you agree with me that the latter two passages are properly associated with those immediately preceding, you will please consider them in their mutual bearings: If you suppose them to relate to different periods and events, I desire you to review them separately.

Respectfully yours,

ABEL C. THOMAS.

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR.—The texts which I have once reviewed, I shall not review again, until I shall have more room than I have in this letter, though you repeat them a dozen times. If you could persuade me to spend my time in doing what I have already done, by expressing yourself dissatisfied with the performance, it would save your theory from being exposed in other points. Neither shall I feel myself called upon to examine every text that you may quote without note or comment, and prove that they do not teach Universalism, further than I may find it convenient to do so. I might quote texts enough in one letter, for you to write a volume of comments upon.

In relation to my view of Rom. viii. I have only to say that whether it be only one line a week, or less or more, it is my exposition, and whether it be measured by the week or the line, it is sufficient until something shall be produced by you more than has yet appeared. But you say it is my opinion. True, sir, and what more have you given than your opinion? I wish to oppose opinion to opinion, argument to argument.

The vast array of demands which you make on me for replies, may answer the place of arguments in your own mind, but such matters cannot be treated as arguments by me. Fix on any text or texts, and show by arguments that that they teach Universalism, and I will meet you, but I shall not take upon myself to explain every text you may refer to without showing that it has anything to do with the subject, more than by mere assertion.

You again introduce the Universality of God's promise, but this has been once met by me in connexion with the subject of conditionality.

You talk finely about God's not having 'began what he is unable to finish,' &c. But you should first prove that God ever began to save all men, unconditionally and irrespectively of their moral agency. You beg the whole question,

by taking it for granted that God ever begun such a work as you suppose.

You quote Isa. liii. 10. 'the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' But it is for you to show that it is the pleasure of the Lord, that those who live and die in sin, in this world, shall be saved in the next. If you understand God's will or purpose by the term *pleasure*, I ask is it not the pleasure of the Lord that all men should be saved in this life? and does that prosper? You also quote Isa. 10, 11, which asserts God's word shall not return void, but accomplish the thing whereunto he sent it. But you should prove that God ever sent his word to save all men unconditionally. Has he not sent his word to save all men in this life? and does it accomplish that? or do those who proclaim it have occasion to exclaim, (Isa. liii. 1,) 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' St. Paul, by whom God sent his word, says, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16: 'For we are to God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death, to the other the savor of life unto life.' Did not the word then accomplish the thing whereunto God sent it by St. Paul? and was it not accomplished in them that perished?

You also quote Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied.' If Christ cannot be satisfied with the travail of his soul, until all men are saved, it must follow that he has been dissatisfied up to the present time, and will remain dissatisfied until the general resurrection, according to your theory. But I suppose he has seen of the travail of his soul and has been satisfied with it whenever, wherever and in whomsoever he has seen it.

You also quote 1 John ii. 2. 'Jesus christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' Universalists hold that man and not God is the subject of this propitiation; that is designed to appease man and reconcile him to God, and not to appease God and reconcile him to man. And you, sir, contend that universal reconciliation will be accomplished in the 'immortal resurrection,' by which you admit that some will live and die unreconciled, and remain unreconcil-

ed up to that time. Now if they are raised in a reconciled state in the resurrection, it cannot be the result of Christ's propitiation operating upon their minds.—All therefore, according to your theory, are not and never will be propitiated in the sense of the text, and of course your emphasis laid upon the expression, 'SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD,' is very much misplaced. What does the fact that he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world prove, since according to your own theory, the world is not propitiated? When you shall have removed these difficulties which your own system throws in your way, I will give my exposition of the text. You connect this text with Isa. liii. 11. 'My righteous servant shall justify many.' But I understand your theory to deny that Jesus Christ justifies any, in a manner to save them from the least degree of deserved punishment for sins committed. If every man suffers the full punishment due to all the sins he commits, as I suppose you hold, there is no room for justification. The same remark applies to Rom. v. 18. 'As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to the justification of life.' This text I understand to be opposed to your theory from beginning to end. To make this text favor your cause, you must admit,

1. That all men were condemned to death in consequence of the offence of one man, that is Adam. Will you admit that?

2. You must admit that the righteousness of one, that is the vicarious atonement of Christ, delivers men from the actual punishment they deserve. Will you admit this?

3. If by the 'justification of life which is by the free gift,' you mean eternal life, or final holiness and happiness, which you must mean to make the text prove any thing to your purpose, then 'condemnation' involved endless punishment and that all men would have been endlessly punished had not Christ died for their redemption. So with verse 19, 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' To avail yourself of the conclusion, suppose it implies universal holiness and happiness, you must first admit

the premises, that many were made sinners by the offence of Adam, and not only so, but that men are made righteous by the imputation of the righteousness or atonement of Christ, and that he saves men from deserved punishment, which I suppose you deny.

I differ from you in relation to Phil. ii. 8—11. I apprehend that more stress should be laid upon the *merits of the death* to which he became *obedient* than to the *simple obedience* in itself considered.—As to the bowing of every knee, it has been made the subject of separate consideration, and need not be renewed in this place.

I have only to add, that for Universalists, who deny the merits of Christ's death as a vicarious atonement, and who deny the doctrine of pardon or the remission of deserved punishment, on the ground of what Christ has suffered for the sinner to quote such texts as the above in support of their theory, is no inconsiderable proof of the inconsistencies and contradictions with which it abounds.

Yours, &c.,

LUTHER LEE.

MR. THOMAS TO MR. LEE.

DEAR SIR:—It appears that I have succeeded in showing you the irrelevancy of your speculations about matter and spirit, and you have now abandoned that prolific item of your evasive policy.—Your new effort, which you dignify as a revelation of absurdities is akin to its predecessor, consisting chiefly of speculations equally wide of the main issue.

You begin (and thus give a sort of speciousness to your labors) by quoting two of my sentences. The *second* of these speaks for itself, and cannot be misunderstood. I multiplied the forms of expression, even to tautology, that you might no longer have any excuse whatever for evading my argument on the paternity of God. Its meaning is palpable, without any allusion to the context. It embodies and expresses the whole ground of my reasoning.

But, sir, the connexion in which I uttered your *first* quotation, proves that you have perverted its meaning. That connexion is as follows :

‘You will be disappointed if you expect me to specify *the mode* in which the Supreme Spirit constituted mankind in His own spiritual likeness, or to discuss *the propriety* of His chosen title of Father of spirits in contradistinction from fathers of the flesh. I base my arguments in THE RELATION ASSERTED by divine revelation, as existing between God and man, namely, the revelation of Father and offspring.’ Letter xv. ¶3.

Every sensible person must see that this language relates to your attempt to draw me into a discussion about *modes* of creating and begetting. I would not follow you ‘behind the record’ to inquire into the truth of the divinely acknowledged affinity of God and man. Yet you wrest a sentence from this paragraph, and having perverted it into a contradiction of your *second* quotation, you proceed to talk largely of ‘a heterogenous mass of ideas !’ Either you know better, or your lack of knowledge is inexcusable. At all events, your assumption of a contradiction, or anything of the sort, is both unwarrantable and untrue, and all your inferences

from that assumption are but the confused dreamings of your own fancy.

It is not necessary to review your theorizing about the priority and origin of the relation, &c. It as little matters *when* God purposed to bring into existence a family of children, as *how* He did it in the time appointed. Equally irrelevant are all your inquiries as to whence His paternal love arises and upon what it depends, and how long it has existed. It is enough to know that the relation is divinely asserted, and that the holiest manifestations of paternal love among men, must be regarded, not as the measure, but as an indication of the fathomless love of the Father of all. I opened the discussion with these positions, separately established; and I am entitled to the argument which they *jointly* supply. I have constantly associated them throughout our correspondence; and if you have so little respect for the intelligence of our readers as to assume or assert the contrary, you are welcome to the consequences.

Your multifarious attempt to sunder the relation and character of God, demands little attention.—You have denied and confuted the principle of your reasoning, as shown in item I of my last letter. Your magnified the divine paternity in order to 'enhance the sinner's guilt.' Your argument admits that there are obligations involved in the relation of Creator and creature, and that those obligations are increased by the acknowledged affinity of the parties as Father and offspring. Without stopping here, and without inquiring into the extent of those obligations, I remark that they are undoubtedly mutual, and that the requirement of perfect filial obedience on the part of man, implies the perfection of paternal love in God. Matt. v. 44—48. It is in this way that the inspired writers associate the divine relation and character; and if you can satisfy even yourself that the Father of spirits may as fitly be represented by the worst father on earth as by the BEST, you can do what I consider impossible.

You, however, dwell considerably on the fact that God is now essentially the same that He was previously to, constituting Himself the Father of all; and you seem to think that I must either abandon my argument, or admit that 'God

has changed and got some new spirit since He became a Father.' If you can a tithe as readily exonerate *your* theory from this result as I can mine, you will do well. You say that the love of God in the primary sense of Father gives no assurance of final holiness and happiness—but so soon as he succeeds in bringing any of his offspring to a knowledge of the truth, by his own direct agency or otherwise, 'lo! the impulses of the new relation into which God has brought Himself' guarantee the largest displays of His previously dormant love! God has changed and got some new spirit, by effecting a change and awakening a new spirit in some of His own offspring!—If you will explain these mysteries, you will see the fallacy of your objection to my argument. I pass to notice a few other particulars.

1. You write a series of sentences on the plan of redemption and its relative date in the purposes of God. I answer, that if an order of time may be allowed in speaking of the divine counsels, the plan of redemption must have been preceded by an absolute purpose to bring into existence a family of children. But the question of priority has no bearing on the matter in discussion, and I know not why you should so largely treat of it, unless it be to occupy space.

2. You speak of 'fallen angels or devils.' You know perfectly well that this is a bare *assumption* of the existence of fallen super-human beings; and you know also that this topic is wholly foreign to the question before us. The introduction of it is in violation of the proprieties of debate, and clearly indicates that you feel the weakness of your cause.

3. The assumption which you close with a contrast of heaven and hell, may also pass without comment. Whoever will compare it with the numbered items of my last letter, will see how greatly you rely on assertion.

4. All that you say about being begotten and born again, was attended to and answered in letter ix. ¶6—9. You have not yet replied.—By Luke xx. 36 and parallels, and also by Rom. viii. 18—24, I have proved that all mankind will become the children of God. My argument on the former you utterly neglect, and the latter you offset by

more opinion. You are probably deferring these matters to the more convenient season of your last letter, so as to exclude a rejoinder.

5. Your objection derived from destruction by fire, flood, &c., was specifically anticipated and refuted in my first epistle. You have not yet offered one word of reply, although I have repeatedly urged you to the work—and now you reiterate the objection! Why do you so constantly resort to this evasive and unmanly policy? Why do you not fairly meet the question on *the ultimate result*, and tell me which of our theories the heart of humanity condemns, and for which it pleads? Is it commending God *wisely* to maintain that temporal destruction is but the precursor of the doom of endless woe? and is it charging Him *foolishly* to look beyond the darkness of time to a final issue which every christian soul most ardently longs and prays for?

6. You say I have *perverted* your argument on the alleged portion, &c., but you do not venture to deny that it is based in the palpable absurdity of a *limited unlimited evil*! I submit to our readers that I have fairly represented your reasoning.—But even admitting the strict proportion for which you contend: What does it amount to? You understand that two and two make four; but you have not defined and explained the relation of *one to infinity*. Did your head condemn and your heart abhor your theory, when you beheld the index on the dial of eternity? or why did you turn away from it, and not inform me what this asserted strict proportion is?

7. Your argument on the illustration of an edifice is resolved into a question about what I mean by 'absolute evil.' Do you expect me to reiterate definitions as often as you choose to neglect them? If you will turn to Letter v, beginning at the close of the first third, you will find your question answered, accompanied by scriptural examples.—You have not yet given the slightest attention to the argument there presented—yet you first look this fact out of countenance, and then gravely inform me that truth has nothing to conceal!

Passing to your notice of my direct proofs of Universalism, I find that you persist in your reckless course of

evasion and neglect. Your reputation as a disputant appears dearer to you than a reputation for candor, and therefore there is small reason to hope that you will repent of your constant effort to avoid my arguments, especially as you endeavor to justify your unparalleled procedure.

You say you have not room—yet a little while ago you complained that you had nothing to do !—But if you really desire space to meet the main issue, why do you so largely indulge in speculations which, even if admitted have no bearing on the question?

You intimate that you *have* reviewed my arguments. How? I will answer by citing a few examples.

We have both written much on Rev. v. 13. In my last letter, the whole matter was condensed into two questions, based in two palpable facts. Why do you not answer them? So long as you could make much ado about Iviathan and codlings and pilgrim-father psalmody, you enjoy yourself finely—and you could even invite our readers to participate in the pious joke. But now that the whole matter is summed up in two serious questions, you take advantage of your boasted reputation for courage, and practically recognize discretion as the better part of valor?

You treated my argument on John xii. 32 in a similar way. You depended mainly on a denial of universality to the phrase *all men*, and you rested your denial on a few passages in which the words *all* and *world* are used hyperbolically. But you did not even attempt to show that the absolute promise, 'I will draw *ALL MEN* unto me,' was rightly be limited in its extent. On the contrary, I showed that such limitation is not admissible.—Instead of venturing any sort of reply on this cardinal point, you resorted to your usual covert of silence.

In like manner you abandon your objections to my argument on Eph. ii. 4—6; iv. 10, and other prominent testimonies. Even more unjust and unwarrantable has been your procedure on Rom. viii. Your course for six weeks indicated a determination not to utter a word in relation thereto; and it was not until I dared you to fulfil your promise of a review, that you condescended to favor me with five lines of *opinion* !—This, sir, is bravery with a

witness. And now you have courage enough to look our readers in the face, and tell them that my argument on that passage, in the latter part of Letter ix., is also mere opinion! Confessedly there is something valuable in a large reputation. There is danger, however, that your drafts will be dishonored, even by those in whose credulity you have the largest stock of credit.

In order to evade my demand for attention to Phil. ii., you adopt a course even more exceptionable than silence or evasion. You say, 'It has been made the subject of separate consideration.' This, sir, is not true.

But we must not stop here. You have not yet uttered a syllable of a reply to my argument on 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28, nor on Heb. ii. 8—nor have you yet given any attention to my exposition of Luke xx. 36, and the three accompanying alternatives. Why do you preserve so profound a silence on these matters? You say, indeed, 'Fix on any text or texts, and show by argument that they teach Universalism, and I will meet you.' This, sir, I have done, as you know perfectly well; and I submit to our readers, that nothing short of discomfiture has prevented you from girding yourself to the work of review.

My direct scriptural argument has been purposely confined to a few passages, believing it better to discuss a few thoroughly, than superficially to investigate many. But you have resisted every attempt to bring you to thorough work, as is shown in the preceding examples. And even in the passages and arguments which follow, you adopt a method which is both evasive of the point at issue, and expressive of your confidence in the vain boast, that, 'Every body knows Luther Lee is [not] a coward.'

1. You say you met the universality of God's promise in connection with its conditionality.—Truly, and on precisely the principle above illustrated. You were driven to the bare possibility that all the heathen will not be damned, and to the naked assumption that even one soul of them will be saved! Moreover, you took the ground that infants and idiots must be renewed by the Holy Ghost in this world in order to be saved in the next—and yet you furnish no sort of proof that a single individual of these classes will be thus

renewed! Besides, you have not replied to the main argument on the promise to Abraham, in Letter xi.; nor have you yet offered a word in relation to my extended proofs and illustrations of a special salvation by faith and hope. This point has a very important bearing on your theory of conditions, but you have deemed it prudent to pass it by unnoticed. Yet you say you met universality in connection with conditionality!

2. You deny that God ever began to save men unconditionally, &c. This sheer evasion is worthy only of a disputant pressed to extremity; and I know not why you resort to it unless it be in defence of your position, that the endless woe of untold millions is just as certain as though it were fixed by an irresistible fate. But even admitting all that you claim on the score of conditions: Did God begin the work of inducing universal compliance with those conditions? You dare not say he did not; and if he did, he is either able to finish what he began, or he is not. Why do you evade this plain argument?

3. Isa. liii. 10. Still clinging to the same evasion you say, 'You should prove that God ever sent his word to save men unconditionally.' You make this remark in the very face of the testimony by which the position is proved! 'As the rain cometh down....so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it *shall accomplish* that which I please,' &c. 'The word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' Isa. xlv. 23; lv. 10, 11. Here, sir, is the proof you demand. Any thing you may assert or prove, as existing in the interim, cannot conflict with this final result. Your refusal to meet my argument on the latter quotation, indicates small confidence in your ability to answer it.

4. Isa. liii. 11. Universal subordination to Christ is a progressive work; yet you assume that the Redeemer designed its immediate completion, and must therefore be dissatisfied! If you had been present on the second or third day of the creation, you might have charged God foolishly on the same principle. That Christ travailed in soul for

the subordination of all mankind, you admit; and that He is able to subdue all things to himself, you will not deny. Will he be satisfied with less than he travailed in soul to effect? Will he be satisfied with effecting less than he is able to accomplish? Here is the true issue. Yet you re-introduce the objection that all things are not yet subordinated, and dwell upon it with all gravity, notwithstanding I have repeatedly urged you to review the argument by which I specifically refuted it!

5. I quoted 1 John ii. 2, in order to show *the extent* of the work assigned to 'Jesus Christ the righteous,' who is denominated 'my righteous servant' in Isa. liii. 11. I also incidentally reminded you, that any attempt to limit either THE WHOLE WORLD in this testimony, OR THE WHOLE CREATION in Rom. viii. would be 'a violent outrage against God and His word.' Instead of frankly conceding the universality of the former phrase, and attempting to release yourself from the charge of committing a violent outrage in relation to the latter, you introduce several irrelevant issues, and even invite me to a discussion of your opinion, namely, that the atonement was designed to appease the immutable God and reconcile him to man! 2 Cor. v. 19. Rom. v. 11. Col. i. 19, 20.

6. In your comment on Rom. v. 18, 19, we have another specimen of your evasive policy. Instead of meeting my argument, you seek to provoke a controversy on topics irrelevant to the matter in debate. Suppose I were to admit every position you have named: what then? For the purposes of this argument, you may assume any meaning you please, and apply it to the condemnation which came upon all men: still the testimony abides, that 'even so *the free gift* came upon ALL MEN unto justification of life.' I will not here discuss any of the doctrines which you suppose the apostle to teach in this connexion, because even were I to grant every thing you contend for, the main issue would be untouched. You tacitly admit that you have not met my argument. In the closing paragraph of your letter, you assert that Universalism abounds in 'inconsistencies and absurdities,' but you do not offer a word of comment on the chief point, namely, that 'all mankind without exception,'

shall be made righteous. Why do you seek controversy about *the means*, and entirely omit consideration of *the end*? You seem greatly desirous to know *how* universal righteousness will be wrought, but your procedure implies that you regard *the fact* itself as of no importance whatever! This, sir, is of a piece with much you have offered in the progress of our discussion. You have evinced great solicitude as to *the when* and *where* and *how*, the time and place and means—whereas these are not the topics in debate. The main issue on the testimony now before us, rests on the declaration, [as exhibited in my last letter,] that ALL MANKIND, *without exception*, SHALL BE MADE RIGHTEOUS. Whether the end shall be attained by direct divine agency, or by progressive operation in the employment of other means, or by imputed righteousness, is not material here to inquire. You have evaded the point of the argument, as you must be aware; and you will either evade it altogether, or review it under circumstances which will preclude a reply. In either event, your reason will be obvious.

In my two preceding letters, I urgently demanded some notice of the arguments you have neglected. I hoped you would adduce your objections, in which event I was fully prepared to confute them, and to substantiate my views by additional and corroborative testimonies of Holy Writ. You however persist in wholly avoiding and evading six or seven of my principal arguments. I have no alternative but to submit to the judgment of impartial men, that you feel yourself incompetent to the task of reply.

Respectfully yours,

ABEL C. THOMAS.

MR. LEE TO MR. THOMAS.

DEAR SIR :—You think that Isa. lv. 10, 11, teaches that God's word is sent to accomplish an unconditional work.—'As the rain cometh down,' &c. If you will consult Heb. vi. 7, 8, you will find that even the rain does not unconditionally cause the earth 'to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater.' We there read, 'For the earth which drinketh in the rain, that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs' meat for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.'

The use you attempt to make of Isa. xlv. 23, 24, is truly wonderful.

Had you consulted the marginal reading you would have learned that the text might be translated, 'He shall say of me, In the Lord is all righteousness and strength.'—This reading would be fatal to your use of the text. Dr. Clark says, 'Probably these are the words of Cyrus who acknowledges that all his success came from Jehovah, and this statement is in effect contained in his decree or proclamation Ezra, 1, 2. 'Thus sayeth Cyrus, King of Persia, The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth.' If this be correct, the word which God declared had gone out of his mouth, and should not return void, simply concerned what he had proposed to do through the instrumentality and agency of Cyrus, all of which no doubt he accomplished.

1. Should you reject this view and insist that it refers to the sending out of the gospel to save all men, you have yet to remove the objection urged in my last which you have entirely overlooked. As a man who talks as loudly as you do about neglecting arguments, would not himself neglect an argument by design, I conclude that you did not see my arguments on this point in my last. I will therefore for your information repeat them.

'Has he not sent his word to save all men in this life? and does it accomdlish that? or do those who proclaim it have occasion to exclaim, (Isa. liii. 1.) 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' St. Paul, by whom God sent his word, says, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16: 'For we are to God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life.' Did not the Lord accomplish the thing whereunto God sent it by St. Paul? and was it not accomplished in them that perished?

2. The text cannot under any construction prove universal salvation. Read it as you wish to read, in your own amended form, and it does not prove the point. Omitting the supplied word it would read thus: 'Unto me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear, Surely, shall say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: to him shall come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.' At the very time of the fulfillment we see there will be some 'incensed against him,' and that such shall 'be ashamed.' It cannot then prove universal salvation, or, if it does, it will be to some a salvation of anger and of shame. How dreadful sterile must be the sacred pages of Universalism, when such texts are quoted and urged in its support?

You think me altogether out of the way, in bringing in the doctrine of the fall and of the atonement in connexion with several of your proof texts, but I trust you will learn before this discussion shall be closed that these matters are perfectly in point. This class of texts which you have quoted establish two positions, viz: the universality of the corruption of mankind in consequence of the fall, and, secondly, the universality of the remedy for sin, found in the merits (not the example) of Christ's death. Now to avail yourself of these texts, you must admit the two great doctrines, the fall in Adam, and the vicarious atonement by Christ. If you deny the doctrine of vicarious atonement, as I suppose you do, and make the death and propitiation of Christ consist of nothing more than an example, your proof texts are disarmed of all their force, and place you in the

light of pleading the universal merits of Christ's death, as the ground of Universal salvation, when in fact, you do not believe that any such merits are attached to his death. On the other hand, if you admit the vicarious atonement of Christ, the text proves nothing more than I admit, viz: the universality of that atonement, and its applicability to all who comply with the conditions. John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' But while this doctrine of a universal fall, and a universal atonement, conditionally applied, forms the basis of my theory, the very admission of a vicarious atonement, which you must admit to render your proof texts even applicable, you have other difficulties to encounter ruinous in their consequences.

1. If sinners can be saved *only* through the merits of Christ's death, it must follow, that if such atonement had not been made, offenders must have been lost forever; and hence, that the proper penalty of the law or punishment of sin, is an endless curse.

2. It must follow on the above principles, that if it can not be proved that sinners can, and do, forfeit the benefits of the atonement by non-compliance with the conditions on which the gospel offers salvation, and consequently endure the punishment from which the death of Christ was intended to save them, they will still be lost as fully and endlessly as they would have been had Christ never died for their redemption.

The above shows that the doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement has an all-important bearing on the question at issue; and for you to evade the point is another evidence that you are afraid of the light. When you shall have told me whether you believe the texts in question teach the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, and of salvation from deserved punishment, I will show that they prove nothing to your purpose on either supposition; but until you venture to take ground, which I think you dare not do, the above is sufficient. Surely texts cannot disprove the doctrine of endless punishment, which do not teach the doctrine of salvation from any degree of deserved punishment. Yours,

LUTHER LEE.

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